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The Gospel of John

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The Gospel of John

A complete analytical exposition
of the Gospel of John

By

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INTRODUCTION

The fourth Gospel has been ascribed from earliest times to the beloved disciple, the Apostle John. He was one of the sons of Zebedee. His mother Salome was especially devoted to the Lord. (See Luke vii:3; xxiii:55, and Mark xvi:1). He knew Him from the beginning of His ministry and had followed Him with much love and faithfulness, and seems to have been the most beloved of our Lord. He never mentions his name in the Gospel, but nevertheless speaks of himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved (Chapter xiii:23; xix:26; xx:2; xxi:7, 20, 24). With James and Peter he was singled out to witness the transfiguration and to go with the Lord to the garden of Gethsemane. The three also were present when the Lord raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mark v:37). John was likewise an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ (xix:26, 35).

The Johannine Authorship.

The Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel is proven by the testimony of the Church-fathers. Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, Eusebius, and above all, Irenaeus, speak of this Gospel as the work of the Apostle John. Other ancient authorities might be added. Of great value is the testimony of the two most pronounced enemie of Christianity, Porphyry and Julian. Both speak of the Gospel of John, and neither one doubted that the Apostle John wrote this document. Had there been any evidence against the Johannine authorship we may rest assured that these two prominent adversaries would have made good use of it to reject the authenticity of the Gospel, which emphasizes so fully the absolute Deity of Christ.

Church

The most interesting and conclusive evidence for the Johannine authorship is furnished by Irenaeus and Polycarp. Polycarp had known the Apostle John personally, and Irenaeus knew Polycarp. In a letter to his friend Florinus, Irenaeus wrote as follows:

Polycar

"I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures."

Now Irenaeus who had known Polycarp the friend and companion of the Apostle John, speaks of the Gospel of John as the work of the Apostle John; he treats the entire fourth Gospel as a well-known and long used book in the Church. He does not mention what authority he had for doing this. There was no need for it in his day, for everybody knew that this Gospel had been written by John. "When Irenaeus who had conversed with Polycarp, the friend of the ApostleJohn, quotes this Gospel as the work of the Apostle, we may fairly presume that he had assured himself of this by the testimony of one so well capable of informing him."* This strongest evidence for the Johannine authorship has been ably stated by R. W. Dale of Birmingham in the following words:—"Irenaeus had heard Polycarp describe his intercourse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord; this must have been long after John's death, perhaps as late as A. D. 145, or even A. D. 150, for Irenaeus lived into the third century. Was the Fourth Gospel published before that time? Then Polycarp must have spoken of it; if John had not written it, Polycarp would have denied that it was genuine; and Irenaeus, who reverenced Polycarp, would never have received it. But if it was not published before that time, if it was unknown to John's friend and disciple forty or fifty years after John's death, then, again, it is incredible that Irenaeus should have received it."

Polycarp's martyrdom was in the year A. D. 155 or A. D. 156. He had known John; and for more than fifty years after the death of John he was one of the trustees and guardians of John's memory. During a great part of that time he was the most conspicuous personage among the Churches of Asia Minor. Nor did he stand alone. He lived to such an advanced age, that he probably survived all the men who had listened with him to John's teaching; but for thirty or forty years after John's death there must have been a large number of other persons who would have associated themselves with him in rejecting a Gospel which falsely claimed John's authority. While these persons lived, such a Gospel would have had no chance of reception; and for thirty years after their death, their personal friends, who had heard them speak of their intercourse with John, would have raised a great controversy if they had been asked to receive as John's a Gospel of which the men who had listened to John himself had never heard, and which contained a different account of our Lord from that which John had given. But within thirty years after the martyrdom of Polycarp our fourth Gospel was universally regarded by the Church as having a place among the Christian Scriptures, and as the work of the Apostle John. The conclusion seems irresistible; John must have written it.

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*Dean Alford, Greek N. T.

The Defeat of the Critics.

The Johannine authorship of this Gospel was first doubted by an English clergyman by name of Evanson, who wrote on it in 1792. In 1820 Prof. Bretschneider followed in the history of the attack upon the authorship of this Gospel. Then came the Tübingen school, Strauss and Baur. Baur, the head of the Tübingen school gave the year 170 as the date when the Gospel of John was written; others put the date at 140; Keim, another critic, at 130; Renan between 117 and 138 A. D. But some of these rationalists were forced to modify their views. The Tübingen school was completely defeated and is now the dead thing of the past. We could fill many pages with the views and opinions of these critics and the answers which able scholars who maintain the orthodox view, have given to them. This, we are sure, is not needed for true believers. The ripest and the best scholarship declares now that the fourth Gospel was written by John. Well said Neander, "This Gospel, if it be not the work of the Apostle John, is an insoluble enigma."

While the correct year in which the Gospel of John was written cannot be given, it seems quite evident that it was about the year 90 A. D.

The Purpose of the Gospel of John.

Modern critics of this Gospel have opposed the genuineness of it on the ground of the radical diversity between the views of the Person of Christ and His teachings as presented in the Gospel of John and the Synoptics. Such a diversity certainly exists, but it is far from being an evidence against the genuineness of this Gospel. It is an argument for it.

The synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, were already in existence for several decades and their contents known throughout the Church. If an uninspired writer, some other one than John the Apostle, has undertaken to write another Gospel, such a writer would, in some way at least, have followed the story which the synoptics so closely follow. But the Gospel of John is, as already stated, radically different from the three preceding Gospels, and yet no critic can deny that the Gospel of John reveals the same wonderful Person who is the theme of the other Gospel records. Matthew wrote the Jewish Gospel, describing our Lord as the King; Mark makes Him known as the true Servant, and Luke pictures the Lord as the perfect Man. Thus the Synoptics emphasize His true humanity and show Him forth as the minister of the circumcision. The first two Gospels at least belong as much to the Old Testament as they belong to the New. True Christianity is not fully revealed in these Gospels. They move on Jewish ground. And what had taken place when finally the Holy Spirit moved the Apostle John to write his Gospel? The nation had completely rejected their Lord and King. The doom predicted by the Lord Jesus had fallen upon Jerusalem. The Roman army had burned the city and the temple. The Gentiles had come into the vineyard and the nation's dispersion among all the nations had begun. These facts are fully recognized by the Spirit of God in John's Gospel. This we find on the very threshold of this Gospel. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John i:11). That Judaism was now a thing of the past is learned from the peculiar way in which the Passover-feast is mentioned. "And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh" (vi:4; also ii:13; xi:55). The Sabbath and the Feast of Tabernacles are spoken of in the same way (v:1; vii:2). Such statements that the divinely given feasts were but "feasts of the Jews", are not found in the Synoptics. In John's Gospel these statements show that we are outside of Judaism. Hebrew names and titles are translated also and the Gentile meaning is given. Messiah, which is interpreted Christ, (i:41). Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted, Master (i:38). The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha (xix:17), etc. This is another evidence that Judaism is no longer in view.

But something else had happened since the three first Gospels had been written. The enemy had come in perverting the truth. Wicked apostates and anti-Christian teachers asserted themselves. They denied the Person of the Lord, His essential Deity, the virgin birth, His finished work, His physical resurrection,, in one word, "the doctrine of Christ." A flood of error swept over the Church.*

"Gnosticism" was corrupting the professing church everywhere. This system spoke of the Lord Jesus as occupying the highest rank in the order of spirits; they also denied the redemption by His blood and the gift of God to believing sinners, that is, eternal life. God in His infinite wisdom held back the pen of the Apostle John till these denials had matured, and then he wrote under divine guidance the final Gospel in which the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, the Second Person of the Godhead, is made known in the fulness of His Glory. Linked with this marvelous picture of Him, Who is the true God and the Eternal Life, is the other great truth made known in the fourth Gospel. Man is dead, destitute of life; he must be born again and receive life. And this eternal life is given by the Son of God to all who believe on Him. It is communicated as a present and abiding possession, dependent on Him, Who is the source and the Life as well. At the same time the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, is revealed in this Gospel as He is not revealed in the Synoptics. The Gospel which reveals the Eternal Life is necessarily the Gospel in which the Holy Spirit as the Communicator, Sustainer and Perfecter is fully made known. The Gospel of John is therefore the New Testament Gospel, the good news that Grace and Truth have come by Jesus Christ. It makes known what is more fully revealed in the doctrinal Epistles.

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*The Epistle of John, besides the early Christian literature, bear witness to this fact. See 1 John ii:18 23; iv:1-6. Men were scattering the anti-Christian doctrines everywhere, so that the Spirit of God demanded the severest separation from such. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not in your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John:10-11). An exhortation which is in force for all times.

The last chapter in which we hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak, before His passion, is the seventeenth chapter. He speaks to the Father in the great prayer rightly called "the high priestly prayer." In it He touches upon all the great truths concerning Himself and His own made known in this Gospel, and we shall also find that all the great redemption truths given in their fulness by the Holy Spirit in the Epistles, are clearly revealed in this prayer.

John's Own Testimony.

At the close of the twentieth chapter of this Gospel we find John's own testimony concerning the purpose of this Gospel. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through (in) His Name." Thus the twofold purpose of the fourth Gospel is given by the Apostle—Christ the Son of God and the Life He gives to all who believe.

The characteristic features of this Gospel are too numerous to mention in this introductory word. We shall point them out in the exposition.

CHAPTER I.

Verses 1-18. The opening verses (1-4) manifest the character of the fourth Gospel. The Synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke) begin with historical statements concerning the wonderful Person who walked among men. The Gospel of John opens with a doctrinal revelation of that same Person. The beloved disciple is the chosen instrument of the Holy Spirit to reveal the full glory of the Son of God, the Only-begotten of the Father, tabernacling among men and manifesting Him. We find nothing said in this Gospel of Him as the son of David and the son of Abraham. The character of the Gospel of John is therefore more doctrinal than historical. It reveals Him who is the true God and the eternal life. He came forth from the Father, with whom He is one; He came into the world to reveal the Father and He has returned to the Father (chapter xvi:28). And He who is the life and light of men communicates eternal life to men, so that born again as children of God they are no longer in darkness, but know the light and walk in the light.

The first eighteen verses contain the great truths of His Person, His Godhead, that He is the Life and the Light of men, that He came into the world which was made by Him and that the world knew Him not, and then the great results of His coming, for those who receive Him, are mentioned. These opening verses contain the entire Gospel of John in embryo.

"In the beginning was the Word." The definite article before "beginning" is not found in the Greek, so that the literal translation is, "In beginning was the Word." This first statement takes us beyond the first verse of the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This is the beginning of creation, but here is another beginning, a timeless beginning, that beginning without a beginning, which our finite mind cannot fathom nor understand. All things had their beginning, but God has no beginning; He has always been. He who is the Word was in the beginning; He who is before all creation, before all things, and above all creation, has no beginning. The little word "was" means "existing." We hear Him say later in this Gospel, "Before Abraham was, I am"; He is the self-existing One. Here then we have the sublime revelation that our Lord Jesus Christ is an eternal Being.

But why is He called by John the Word? No other writer of the New Testament uses the word *Logos*. Much of interest is connected with this fact. Philo of Alexandria, a mystical Jewish philosopher, used the same term, and numerous critics have charged the writer of this Gospel with having borrowed this expression from Philo. But one of the greatest authorities on these ancient sources, Professor Harnack, has completely abandoned this theory and states that "the Word, as used by the Apostle John, has little more in common with the Logos of Philo than the name." Still another reliable scholar declares that "nothing could be more unlike than Philo and John." The fact is that Philo with his mystical speculations spoke of the Logos as an undefinable something, as an intermediate agency between God and man, but he never spoke of the Logos as a person.

Others have traced the use of the word Logos to the Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Scriptures in the so-called Targumim. These paraphrases employ the word "Memra" (the Aramaic equivalent for the Greek Logos) whenever God is spoken of as revealing Himself to man. All His relations to the world are in these paraphrases ascribed to the Memra, the Word. It is so used in hundreds of passages. But John could not have copied from these exegetical works because they were written several centuries after he wrote his Gospel.

But we do not need to speculate on the use of the expression. The Holy Spirit had before spoken of the second person of the Godhead as the Word. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made" (Psalm xxxiii:6); "He sent His Word and healed them" (Psalm cvii:20); both passages may be interpreted as meaning the Son of God. And the Son of God is called the Word, because He is the express image of God, just as the invisible thought is made visible by the spoken word. He is the revealer and interpreter of the mind and the will of God. Martin Luther explains it in a very simple way: "Just as a man has a word in his heart, so also God in His eternal majesty and Deity has a Thought, a Word in His own heart, with Himself. This Word, which God the Father has is so entirely one with Him, that there is nothing in God which does not also belong to the Word; so that when we see the Word we see God."

The first sentence then, "In the beginning was the Word" reveals the fact that the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is eternal. He is with God before all things. The second statement shows that He is a Person, distinct from God the Father, and yet one with Him. "And the Word was with God." Where God was from all eternity there also was the Word, the Son of God, sharing His Glory and all His attributes; their Godhead is one. And the Word was the object of God's eternal Love, for He became not Love yesterday, but "God is Love." He has always been Love. Of this eternal love-relation the Lord Jesus Christ bears witness in His great prayer recorded in this Gospel, "For Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (Chapter xvii:24).

And then the crowning revelation, "And the Word was God." He therefore is very God and not a creature, an angel, or any other being inferior to God. In nature, essence and substance He is God. Human language could not make it plainer than it is made in this statement, that the Lord Jesus Christ is very God. This first verse of the Gospel of John is one of the profoundest revelations of the Bible, yet so blessedly simple that a child can know its great truth. We must likewise remember that throughout this Gospel we have the self-witness of our Lord to the three great facts concerning Himself as stated in this revelation. The Lord testifies of His own eternal existence, "I and the Father are one," "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (Chapter x:30, xiv:9-11). How marvelous is that fifth chapter in which the Lord Jesus Christ confirms by His own words the Spirit's testimony of this first verse! Well has it been said, "To maintain in the face of such a text, as some so-called Christians do, that our Lord was only a man, is a mournful proof of the perversity of the human heart." And Unitarianism and its kin, Christian Science, falsely so-called, Russellism (alias International Bible Student Association), and Modernism, furnish "the mournful proof of the perversity of the human heart." How anyone in view of such plain statements can maintain that our Lord is only a creature and not very God, is hard to believe. But it is written that the god of this age blinds the eyes of them that believe not. Well has a saint of God said on this verse, "It is rashness to search too far into it. It is godliness to believe it. It is Life eternal to know it. And we can never have a full comprehension of it till we come to enjoy it."

"The same was in the beginning with God" (verse 2). This is a repetition of the great truth stated in the previous verse, the Holy Spirit anticipating the time when men would teach that the Lord Jesus Christ was not from all eternity a person in the Godhead distinct from God the Father, and yet with Him in an eternal and ineffable union. The very repetition of it shows its great importance. "Repetitions in Scripture have divers uses. In *prayer* they argue affection. In *prophecy* they note celerity and certainty. In *threatenings* they note unavoidableness and suddenness. In *precept* they mean the necessity of performing them. In the *truths*, like that before us, they serve to show the need of believing and knowing them."

The next verse takes us into the realm of Creation, the beginning of which the first verse of the Bible speaks. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (verse 3). When the Holy Spirit wrote through the Apostle Paul the message to the Colossians, who were being influenced by false views on the Person and Glory of Christ, He gave the same revelation. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him" (Col. i:16). He is the Creator of all things. But that does not mean the creation of evil; God is not the author of moral evil. The evolution theory practically makes Him that. The question, "If nothing was made without Christ, from whence came sin?" has often been raised by theologians. Sin came in after all things had been created. "By one man sin entered into the world" (Satan's fall was before that). "That sin could not have entered without divine permission, and that its entrance has been overruled to the display of Divine Love and Grace in Redemption, are undeniable truths. But we have no right to say that 'sin' was among the 'all things' which were made by Christ."

And this creation, so wonderful in its vastness, and in the minutest details, this great Book of Nature, speaks of Him and makes known His Glory. Alas! how little we know of that revelation of Himself in creation!

"In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." After we have learned of His Godhead and His Creatorship we hear of what was in Him. "In Him was life." While it is true that He is the source of all life, mere physical life is not meant, for the second part of this verse declares that this life was the light of men. It must therefore be more than physical life; it is spiritual life. And this spiritual life which is in Him is eternal life. He alone is the source of eternal life. It is true of Him, "With Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light we shall see light" (Psalm xxvi:9). John speaks of this in His Epistle, "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John vii). And that life was the light of men; it was active from the beginning, and then that life which was with the Father was manifested unto us, the Word became flesh.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Solemn truth this is! The light has been constantly shining in the darkness which sin has brought into the world, and the darkness is so dense and horrible that the light as such cannot banish. The spiritual darkness comprehended (or apprehended) it not. The commentator Bengel remarks on these five first verses of this Gospel, "In the first and second verses of this chapter mention is made of a state before the creation of the world; in the third verse the world's creation; in the fourth the time of man's uprightness; in the fifth the time of man's fall."

But how feeble are human words of comment on these wonderful statements on the threshold of this Gospel! They are inexhaustible. Only the light of eternity will reveal the fullest meaning of them.

Verses 6-10. He who was sent of God to witness to the Light is now introduced in this Gospel. We notice the striking contrast between Him, the Son of God, and John. Our Saviour is the Creator, John the creature; He is the Life and the Light, John a witness, "a man sent of God." His person and work as the forerunner is clearly predicetd in the Old Testament (Isaiah xl:3, etc.; Mal. iii:1). Of him our Lord testified that among them that are born of women no greater one hath risen than John the Baptist, and yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (Matthew xi:10-12). He was born in as miraculous a way as Isaac, and was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. His great call was to witness to the Light. But he was not that Light. In chapter v:35 our Lord speaks of John as "a burning and shining light." How exact the words of God are may be learned by the two words used for Light, in connection with our Lord as "the Light" and John the Baptist as a burning and shining light. The Greek word used in describing John as a light means "candle," translated thus in Matthew v:15 and Rev. xviii:23. The word used to describe our Lord as the Light is the word "Phos"—"the Light." He is the fountain and source of all light. And as it has been said, "What an assurance of a world far away from God, that the light must have one to proclaim it, the Creator must have one to introduce Him into His own world. And then it was necessary to say, 'He was not that light,' lest men should mistake the witness to Christ for the Christ he witnessed to."

And here we may notice the difference between what is said of John the Baptist and his ministry in the Synoptics, especially in the Gospel of Matthew, and what we read of him here. In Matthew he is heralding the King and proclaims that the promised Kingdom, promised by the Prophets of God, had drawn nigh. In bearing that witness he also witnessed concerning the Light. But why is there nothing said of this peculiar ministry in John's Gospel? Why do we not read again of that Kingdom being nigh?

Why is all this omitted in the fourth Gospel? The reason is very simple. Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed some twenty years before the beloved disciple was instructed by the Holy Spirit to write. The nation had been overtaken by that which the lips of the Son of God had so vividly pictured. They had fallen by the edge of the sword and were now being scattered among all the nations. When John wrote his Gospel, the new dispensation, this present dispensation of Grace, had fully set in. Judaism is no longer recognized by God and this Gospel repeatedly bears witness to this fact, as we hope to show. It is different with the synoptic Gospels; these move upon Jewish ground. Judaism being set aside, the fact of Israel having rejected the kingdom makes it unnecessary to introduce John the Baptist as the herald of the King in this Gospel. The truth is, if the forerunner's witness to Israel were brought into this Gospel, it would be all out of keeping with the scope of it.

His witness was given concerning Christ as the Light, that all might believe through him. This does not mean, as some expositors have it, through Christ, but through the witness of John the Baptist. We must also notice that in verse seven the word "men" is in italics. It does not mean that all mankind should believe through hearing the witness John bore, but those Jews who were waiting for the consolation of Israel, who believingly expected the coming of Christ as their Redeemer. In this chapter we find later a blessed illustration of the results of the witness to Christ through John. And Christ is the true Light, yea, the only Light. Notice the correct rendering of verse 8. "The true Light was that which, coming into the world, lighteth every man." This verse has occasioned much difference of opinion. It would take pages to state them all. These words take us beyond the confines of Israel. The true Light, lighteth not the Jews only (though it is true that only to Israel promises were given), but the true Light lighteth every man who is in the world, the Gentiles as well as the Jews. He is dispensing Light to all who are in the world.* He casts His Light on every human being in the world. There is much said about heathen darkness, but from this we learn that there is heathen light as well.

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*The word "world" as we shall learn from the exposition is on the great characteristic words of the Gospel of John.

But what does the Light find in the world? Nothing but the darkest darkness, opposing Him as the true Light. This we learn from the next statement: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him" (came into being through Him), "and the world knew Him not." Before He ever became incarnate and appeared in the creature's garb on earth to make God known to man, He was in the world. There was a revelation of Himself in Creation as well as a primeval revelation; His Spirit also was at work among men, for He said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. vi:3). But the world turned away from the Light. We find this in the first chapter of Romans: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves wise, they became fools." (Rom. i: 19-22.) These words are the right comment of the tenth verse of the first chapter in John.

Verses 11-14. He came in the fullness of time, in God's own time, to the nation, which had been specially prepared. The advantage of the Jews was that unto them were committed the oracles of God. (Rom. iii:2.) Theirs was the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." (Rom. ix:4, 5.) To this nation He was promised, of this nation, as the seed of Abraham and the son of David He came, and when He came, of whom all their prophets spake, they received Him not. It is again of interest to note the two words used in the original for "His own." He came unto His own, which means, *what was His own*, His own things; and His own, *His own subjects*, received Him not. The land to which He came, the city and the temple, all were His own; and those who should have bowed in homage at His feet received Him not. It does not say "they knew Him not" (in contrast with the world which knew Him not); they deliberately refused to receive Him. They rejected their King.

The eleventh verse embodies all that which in detail is described in the preceding Gospels. How He came to His own, manifested Himself in their midst and then was rejected by the nation. This is the story of the Synoptics in a nutshell. And now we are led in this Gospel into something new, which in the preceding Gospels is not even hinted at. With the statement that His own received Him not, the way is opened to bring in that which was in the eternal purpose of God, though not fully revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures. His own rejected Him, but what about those who receive Him? The answer is blessed indeed—"to them gave He the right" (or authority) "to become the children of God, to those believing on His Name." It is Grace which comes in at this point. Of course, it is all in anticipation of the Cross and the great work accomplished there in the death of Christ. The world knew Him not; the Gentile world had turned away from Him, the Jews had rejected Him; all the world is guilty before God. And now Grace acts, and this Grace makes of lost sinners children of God by faith in His Name. Nowhere in the Old Testament is the sonship of individual believers declared. Here for the first time in the Word of God we find the precious good news, the Gospel of Grace, that those believing on His Name, the Name of a rejected Christ, a Christ who died and is risen from the dead, become the children of God.

Well may we pause here and think. Here is the eternal truth of Grace. Here we are face to face with truths which remain as long as a race of sinners is on earth. We have learned of the human race not apprehending the light, the world not knowing Him, the Jews rejecting Him, and God in Grace coming in and saving those who are lost, making them His children and accomplishing this in ONE way only. "Believing on His Name." But these great truths, these heavenly truths, unchangeable as God is unchangeable, are the truths which are rejected in our day. One of the most widespread false teaching today is that which claims that all men are children of God, and that if man lives right and acknowledges God in some kind of a religion, God is his Father and all is well with him. We are reminded of the eloquent preacher who, a few years ago, preached on the mutilated text of Scripture, "We are all the sons of God." He preached to his audience the old delusion of a Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man and claimed that all men are sons of God, and none will be lost. But the second half of this verse he omitted—"We are all the sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ." And the latter, personal faith in the Son of God, the Christ who died for the ungodly, is today not only ruled out, but bitterly opposed and ridiculed.

We pass on to our readers a sad illustration of how men gave up the faith in the Gospel, though they once taught it and evidently believed. Before us is a commentary on John's Gospel, published half a century ago. The author, then a young man, gives an excellent comment on the words of verse 12. Let us listen to him:

" 'To become sons of God.' Sons and therefore (1) partakers of the Divine nature, (2) entitled to walk in freedom as children, not in bondage as servants, (3) heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, His only Begotten Son. But the full conception of the meaning of this sonship we cannot know till in the other world we see Him as He is.

" 'Even to them that believe on His Name.' His Name is Jesus—*i. e.*, Saviour—given to Him because He saves His people from their sins. To have faith in that name is to have faith in Him as a personal Saviour from sin. Observe, then, that this verse comprises the whole Gospel in a sentence. It declares (1) the object of the Gospel, that we are by nature the children of wrath and may become sons of God; (2) the source to which we are to look for this prerogative of sonship: power conferred by God; (3) the means by which we are to attain it; personal faith in a personal Saviour from sin."

Could any one state it better? Yet the hand which wrote these words fifty years ago has written since that which denies and destroys that faith. The above quotation is from the "Commentary of the Gospel of St. John," by Dr. Lyman Abbott. And he is one of the many known as no longer holding that faith, which was once and for all delivered unto the Saints.

We must not pass lightly over this great Gospel text: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, to those believing in His Name." The reader will note that we change the word "sons" in the authorized version to "children." John never uses the word "son." In 1 John iii:1 it is mistranslated, as it is here. Not "Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the *sons* of God," but "the *children* of God." In John's writings it is always the question of life in Christ, having been born again and thus brought into the family of God. Sons of God believers are likewise, but the Apostle Paul is used to tell us of the fullest meaning of our sonship and heirship in Christ.

And we become children of God by the new birth which is a communication of life and nature. "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." To be thus begotten of God is brought about by receiving the Word, believing on His Name, and by the action of the Spirit of God. The above negative statements answer all the modern inventions which deny the new birth. Not of blood, that is by inheritance, as the Jews boasted of having Abraham for their father; not of the will of the flesh, by reformation, and the efforts of themselves; nor of the will of man, by the acts and deeds of others, as the religious man does, by looking to an ordinance or a man-made priesthood to help him.

The fourteenth verse tells us of the incarnation, the revelation of God to man, in Him who became man.

The eternal Word, the Word which was and is God, we are now told, became flesh, He took on the human nature. In the early Church a system arose under the name of Docetism, which was the source of Gnosticism.* One of the representatives of Docetism was Cerinthus, a contemporary of the Apostle John. The Docetists believed that our Lord had only an apparent human body. We believe the term "flesh" is employed by the Apostle John to show the reality of the manhood of our Lord and thus to rebuke these false teachers. We might mention here that four other heresies are completely answered by John i:14. (1) Arianism, which holds that our Lord was not true God. This heresy is alive today in Unitarianism, Russellism (International Bible Students, as they call themselves now), Christian Science and other cults. The fact that this verse states that the *Word* became flesh, and the first verse of this Gospel states that the Word was God, furnishes a perfect denial of Arianism. (2) Appollinarianism, which taught that our Lord was God and Man, but this system held that our Lord only had a human body and not a human soul. The word "flesh" contradicts this, for it means a real man with body and soul. (3) Nestorianism holds that the Godhead made one person, and the manhood another person. This is also answered by this text, "the Word became flesh," which shows union and not separation. (4) Eutychianism confounded the natures of our Lord and taught that Christ is from two natures, but not of two natures. This speculative theory is also silenced by this statement. And there are other false teachings concerning the Person and the nature of our Lord. We believe that John i:14 answers them all.

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*This wicked system is in some of its teachings reproduced by Satanic agencies in "Christian Science" of our times.

The truth stated in this verse is not for reason to explain, but for faith to believe. How the two perfect and distinct natures were united in one Person, perfect God and perfect Man, the finite mind of man cannot explain nor define. There is an old Latin inscription, said to date back to the first century, which is interesting, as it embodies the faith of the beginning. It represents "The Word" which became flesh, giving this self-witness: "I am what I was—that is God."—"I was not what I am—that is man."—"I am now called both, that is both God and Man."

The modern heresy which goes by the name "Kenosis" and which is taught in many of the leading theological seminaries of today, must be branded as dangerous and wicked in the light of the simple statement, "The Word became flesh." The term signifies "emptying" and is derived from Phil. ii:7—"He emptied Himself" (Greek: Ekenosin). This theory teaches that in His incarnation our Lord voluntarily limited and abridged His divine powers, and that during the entire period of His humiliation the divine attributes were suspended, and He thought and spake as a mere man. In other words, this theory teaches that He ceased to be God when He took on the body of man; "The Word became flesh" tells us that He did not cease for a moment to be God, for He is God manifested in the flesh. He emptied Himself of the outward glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John xvii:2); He could not empty Himself of His Deity. God cannot cease to be God. "It was the God-man that lived, suffered, died, and rose again. It is written, that God has purchased the Church with His own blood. It was the blood of one who was not man only, but God."*

Furthermore, the word "flesh" does not mean that He had a body as a true man in which was sin. He did not take on "sinful flesh." He knew no sin, not only in the sense that He did not sin, but that He had a nature which *could not sin.* The body He took on in incarnation was called into existence by a creative act of the Holy Spirit. It was a holy body, a prepared body. No taint of sin or corruption was in that body. The eternal Word, as holy as God is, for He is God, could never tabernacle in a human body which in any way had something of fallen human nature in it. The peccability of our Lord is another evil doctrine. Many good Christians hold it without realizing what an awful dishonor is done by it to our Lord, and that the logical consequence is, that if our Lord could have sinned and sin was in His human nature, He needed a Saviour and could not have been our Saviour. And because the body of our Lord, a real human body, had no sin and knew no sin, death, which is in the world by sin, had no claim on His body. Yet because it was a real human body, it was possible for that body to die. When He went to the cross, He Who knew no sin was made sin for us and then He gave that body as the unspeakable, great sacrifice. Yet that body of flesh given on the cross, which died there, could not see corruption. Therefore that body was raised from among the dead. In that body He left the world and went back to the Father. Sitting at the right hand of God, interceding in behalf of His people as a priest and advocate, He is still Man as well as God. Christ's humanity and Deity are both in heaven. And when He returns to establish His Kingdom He comes in that same body.

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*Bishop Ryle.

And the Word became flesh "tabernacled among us." This is the better translation, which, however, does not mean that the Son of God dwelt in His human body as in a tabernacle, which He abandoned when He went back to the Father. Well has one said, "Christ continueth now, and shall forever, as true Man as when He was born of the Virgin. He so took human nature as never to lay it down again." He made His abode with men, tabernacled here for thirty and three years. Some blessed coming day, when the eternal purposes of God are all accomplished, when the new heaven and the new earth have been called into existence, He will forever tabernacle with redeemed men. "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." (Rev. xxi:3.)

And He who tabernacled down here for thirty-three years, who pitched His tent in His own land, among His own, is the same who dwelt of old with Israel, who dwelt in that earthly tabernacle, whose glory was seen in the midst of His people and whose glory filled the temple.

"And we beheld His glory, the glory as of an Only Begotten with the Father, full of Grace and Truth." This is the witness of John and his fellow disciples. See also John's first Epistle (1 John i:1). They beheld His Glory; they were eye witnesses. We doubt not the allusion is mostly to the transfiguration, of which John was a witness, and where they were, according to the statement of Peter, eyewitnesses of His Majesty, when He received honor and glory from the Father (2 Peter i:16, 17). But they also beheld the Glory of His Deity in His miracles. And He is the Only Begotten with the Father. Only John by the Spirit of God uses this phrase, "the Only Begotten"; it tells us of His eternal Sonship. He was always the beloved of God;

always with God. And here again we are constrained to say, we must believe and not even attempt to explain.

"The subject is one of those which we must be content to believe and reverence, but must not attempt to define too narrowly. We are taught distinctly in Scripture that in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We are taught, with equal distinctness, that 'Sonship' describes the everlasting relation which exists between the first and second Persons in the Trinity, and that Christ is the only begotten and eternal Son of God. We are taught, with equal distinctness, that the Father loveth the Son, and loved Him before the foundation of the world. (John xvii:24). But here we must be content to pause. Our feeble faculties could not comprehend more if more were told us."*

And such a One has opened to a world of sinners the riches of God's fathomless Grace and Truth. He has made known Grace and Truth; all Grace and Truth are in Him, by Him and through Him. See the blessed foreshadowing in Exodus xxxiii:18, 19.

Verses 15-18. John the Baptist's witness is next recorded. It was given long before this Gospel was written by the beloved disciple. In the Greek the verb is in the present tense, not "bare witness," but "beareth witness." While the witness-bearer had left the earthly scene, his testimony was not dead, but still living and glorifying the Son of God. And this is his witness: "He that cometh after me is come to be before me, for He was before me." John appeared first and was, according to the testimony of our Lord, the greatest prophet. The Lord Jesus in His ministry came after John, but the forerunner now declares that He who came after him, has come into a greater place of honor and glory, and then the Baptist bears witness of the pre-existence of our Lord; John did not say "for He is before me," but, "for He was before me."

The sixteenth verse is not the witness of John. It is a word of praise, of grateful, adoring acknowledgment of those who have believed on His Name and who have found in Him all their need and wants supplied. The beloved disciple, by the Spirit of God, utters this praise and every individual believer may join in. It is the universal praise of the Redeemed, that all their springs, their blessings are in Him, and in Christ alone. The fullness here is that fullness of the Godhead which dwells in Him bodily, as the risen, glorified Christ with whom the believer is one. And out of that blessed union with Him there flows forth grace upon grace, nothing but grace, without measure and without limit. All that our souls need is found in Him and supplied by Him, grace upon grace. It has been explained to mean "grace in the place of grace, constant, fresh, abundant supplies of new grace, to take the place of old grace, and therefore unfailing, abundant grace, continually filling up and supplying all our need." And that grace which is stored up in Him is inexhaustible. Chrysostom said, "The sea is diminished if you take a drop from it, though the diminution be imperceptible; but how much soever a man draw from this Fountain, it continues undiminished."

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*Ryle on John.

The law was given through Moses; it could do nothing for man, for it was weak through the flesh, man being a sinner without strength (Rom. viii:3). The Son of God came and Grace and Truth came to be by Him. He is the Truth and manifests the Truth, and Grace is by Him also. The remarks of Augustine on this verse are helpful. "The law threatened, not helped; commanded, not healed; showed, not took away our feebleness. But it made ready for the Physician, who was to come with grace and truth." The second giving of the Law (the first tables of stone having been broken) brought down the Lord; He descended in a cloud and stood with him (Moses) there. And the descended Lord proclaimed the name of the Lord. In the proclamation of that Name, He said "Abundant in Grace and Truth." And that Lord who descended was none other but the Son of God (Exod. xxxiv:4-9).

It was at that time that Moses prayed "Show me Thy Glory." And he received the answer "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exod. xxxiii:20). No man hath seen God at any time. But here is One who has always been with the Father, the Only-begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, and He hath declared Him. There can be no question in the presence of this positive statement "no man hath seen God at any time" that all the manifestations of God in Old Testament times were not the manifestations of God the Father, but of God the Son. And Christ the Son of God is in the bosom of the Father (not was in the bosom for He never left that place). It expresses the love-place He has, the place of greatest intimacy and affection. And as such He came to declare the Father, to make Him, who is invisible, visible to man.

We have concluded with this verse this marvellous opening section of this Gospel. That we have in this section one of the greatest revelations of God's Holy Word can never be denied. Still it is denied, and men, calling themselves scholars, talk of the Johannine theology, as if John's mind put these great and inexhaustible, fathomless statements together. No man could ever conceive such wonderful truths as they are put together in these first eighteen verses of this chapter. Let us meditate on them more and praise God for His wonderful Love and Grace in giving us such a Saviour and such a salvation.

The second half of this chapter introduces this wonderful person of whom the opening verses bear witness. The Evangelist now describes, in His own God-given way and manner, that blessed Life in His earthly ministry; the historical part begins here.

Before He appears upon the scene we have the witness of John the Baptist.

Verses 19-28. The witness of John the Baptist as recorded in this Gospel is of a different nature from the recorded witness in the preceding Gospels. There it is the witness to the nation, but here he bears witness to the person of Him who was about to appear in their midst, All that which concerns the nation, the promised kingdom. is omitted in this Gospel. The fact that the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him who he was, shows the effectiveness of his preaching. It must have created a great sensation; the delegation was probably sent by the Sanhedrim. Then he confessed and denied not. He confessed that he was not the Christ and he did not deny who he was. It is a beautiful example of true humility. He takes no honor whatever for himself, but Christ is the Person whom he desires to honor and to exalt.

"The greatest saints of God in every age of the Church have always been men of John the Baptist's spirit. In gifts, and knowledge, and general character they have often differed widely. But in one respect they have always been alike; they have been "clothed with humility" (1 Peter v:5). They have not sought their own honor. They have thought little of themselves. They have been ever willing to decrease if Christ might only increase, to be nothing so that Christ might be all. And here has been the secret of the honor God has put upon them. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke xiv:11).

"If we profess to have any real Christianity, let us strive to be of John the Baptist's spirit. Let us study humility. This is the grace with which all must begin, who would be saved. We have no true religion about us, until we cast away our high thoughts, and feel ourselves sinners. This is the grace which all saints may follow after, and which none have any excuse for neglecting. All God's children have not gifts, or money, or time to work, or a wide sphere of usefulness; but all may be humble. This is the grace, above all, which will appear most beautiful in our latter end. Never shall we feel the need of humility so deeply, as when we lie on our deathbeds, and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Our whole lives will then appear a long catalogue of imperfections, ourselves nothing, and Christ all."*

They did not ask him if he was the Christ. Every real Jew believed in the coming of Christ, the Messiah. From Luke we learn that John was really suspected of being the promised One. "And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not" (Luke iii:15). But was he perhaps Elias? He answered very positively, "I am not." Here we face the well known difficulty, how could the John Baptist make such a statement when the Lord Himself bore witness that John is Elias? "Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say to you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed . . . then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist" (Matt. xvii:11-12). The Jews expected Elijah, the literal Elijah to come back, before the advent of Messiah. John confesses that he is not that Elijah whom they expected and who is predicted in Malachi iv:5. Many of the oldest commentators like Augustine, Gregory, Jerome and others taught and believed a double coming of Elijah. "As there are two comings of Christ, first to suffer, then to judge, so there are two comings of Elijah; first of John before Christ's first coming, who is called Elias, because he came in the manner and spirit of Elias; secondly, of the person of Elijah, before Christ's second coming" (Chrysostom). "Whereas John denieth himself to be Elias, and Christ after affirmeth it, there is no contradiction. There is a double coming of Elijah. The one is in spirit before Christ's coming to redeem; the other in person, before Christ's second Coming. According to the first, Christ's saying is true, This is Elias. According to the second, John's speech is true, I am not Elias" (Gregory). "What John was to the first advent, Elias will be to the second advent. As there are two advents, so there are two heralds" (Augustine). And this solves the difficulty.

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*Ryle on John.

They asked him next if he was that Prophet. This question is based on Deuteronomy xviii:15. But the prophet promised in this passage is Christ Himself.

From Acts iii:22 we know that "The Prophet like unto Moses" is Christ. Evidently the questioners did not know that the Prophet promised by Moses is Christ. The traditions of the Elders probably taught something different.

Having only received negative replies from John the Baptist, they continued the interview by asking him, Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself? These questions he answered by a statement of Scripture. He does not use Malachi's prophecy concerning Elijah, but quotes Isaiah. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord" (Isaiah xl:3).* He claims the fulfilment of this prophecy and that this mission is to prepare the way for Christ. Again we notice his great humility. He speaks of himself as only a voice. He whom he heralds is the Lord, Jehovah, but he only a voice crying in the wilderness.

There was no answer from the side of the delegation. They probably were in complete ignorance of the claim John the Baptist had made. The passage in Isaiah was known to them; the meaning of it was hidden from them; but John being filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb had applied it to himself. The prominence which John gave to water baptism brings forth a second question. The inquirers had been sent by the Pharisees, the ritualistic sect of Judaism. The action of John, by commanding baptism, must have greatly concerned them. "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" Baptisms at different times and with a religious meaning were important ceremonials of the sect of the Pharisees. They taught all kinds of ablutions, including the washing of hands. They are anxious to know why he baptizes, what authority he has in doing it, if he is not that Christ or Elijah. Evidently they connected Baptism with the coming of Christ. According to ancient Judaism, baptism in water is, with circumcision, the essential thing for proselytes; without baptism no one could be admitted into Judaism. The traditional belief of Judaism was that when Messiah comes the nations would all turn to Judaism; and it may have been this belief which brought forth the question. Baptism was also looked upon by ancient Judaism as an expression of penitence. This of course was the meaning of John's Baptism. When those who listened to him believed the message and repented, they went into the river Jordan and outwardly witnessed to their repentance by water baptism. Jordan is the type of death. This is proven by the meaning of the word Jordan, which is "descending," and by the typical meaning, as seen in the passage of the children of Israel through Jordan. In submitting to John's baptism and going into Jordan the confession was made that death was their due on account of their sins. No greater mistake can be made than to identify John's Baptism with Christian Baptism. Yet theological writings and commentaries are filled with this error. Calvin, for instance, wrote, "it is a foolish mistake into which some have been led, of supposing that John's Baptism was different from ours." Acts xix answers this perfectly. There in Ephesus the Apostle Paul found certain disciples. They were baptized with John's baptism, and ignorant of the great redemption facts, including the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then after Paul had instructed them, and when they heard and believed, Paul baptized them again in the name of the Lord Jesus. If John's baptism is the same as Christian Baptism, the Apostle Paul would have made a colossal blunder in baptizing these disciples the second time. John's Baptism was unto repentance; Christian Baptism could then not be instituted. It was given after the death and resurrection of our Lord, and is therefore into the death of Christ (Rom. vi:3-4). This is also one of the numerous arguments against the post-millennial theory that when John the Baptist preached the Kingdom, he announced the present dispensation. *Neither the Kingdom preaching of John, nor his Baptism, has anything to do with this present dispensation, or with the Church.*

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*It will be learned by reading Isaiah xl that in this chapter there is as in so many other prophecies in the Old Testament, a blending of the first and second coming of Christ. Isaiah xl:1-11 can only be fully understood in the light of the Second Coming of Christ.

And how it should have thrilled them when this humble Prophet, the voice, declared, "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me hath come to be before me; the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." How they should have at once asked the question, Where is this One? Who is He, so that we may know Him? But they are silent. They care not to know the One whom John so blessedly exalts in His witness. And so it is today in ritualistic Christendom.

Verses 29-34. It was the next day after the conversation with the Jerusalem delegation at Bethany* when the blessed

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*This is not the Bethany where Mary, Martha and Lazarus had their home, but another place called by that name near one of the fords of the River Jordan. The place cannot be fully located. Bethabara as in the Authorized Version is an incorrect reading.

One whom John had announced, He who is the Life and the Light of men, appeared at the same place. He was not present the previous day, and probably came out of the wilderness where He had just spent the forty days in fasting and prayer, where He had been tested by the Devil. Then joyfully John acclaimed Him as the Lamb of God. "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." This shows that John the Baptist knew Him as the Lamb of God, the Sin-bearer and the Saviour; he trusted in Him and his faith testified of Him. There are some who teach that John called Him the Lamb of God on account of His meek character, but this view is incorrect. While He was meek and lowly, John testified of Him as the One who had come to fulfill in His sacrificial death on the cross, all which had been foreshadowed in the Old Testament dispensation and all which the prophets predicted. He is the true Passover-Lamb, the Lamb of whom Isaiah spoke, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isaiah liii:7). The expression John used is so much more significant as the Passover was near, which we learn from Chapter ii:13.

Every Jew was familiar with the meaning of the lamb, for it was used as the daily sacrifice morning and evening. Therefore sacrifice cannot be separated from the lamb; the two words belong together. He came to give Himself as the sacrifice for sinners. It must be noticed that John did not say that He was then taking away, as the Lamb of God, the sin of the world. When it says elsewhere in Scripture, "He was made sin for us," it does not mean that He was made sin in His holy life on earth; He did not take away sin by His life. Nor does it say, "He will take away sin" nor "has taken away," but "who taketh away the sin of the world." It is a broad statement which includes the Person of the Saviour, the work He will do and the ultimate, great result of His work, the final effect of His sacrificial death. Upon the work of Christ as the sin-bearer, the Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, the Gospel is preached and when believed blessed results follow. Sinners are cleansed, saved by grace, born again, made children of

God and heirs of glory, are filled with the Spirit and united into one body. But all this, infinitely blessed as it is, is far from being the full meaning of this statement of John, nor is it the ultimate result of the precious work of the Lamb of God. We use the words of another.

"When Christ comes again in His Kingdom, there will be a further result; for all creation will then be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and Israel will at length look upon Him whom they pierced in their blind unbelief. The blessing resulting from the sacrifice of Christ will then be far and wide extended, but not yet complete. Only the new heavens and the new earth (and this exceeds the limited scope of the Jewish prophets) will behold the ultimate fulfillment; and then indeed it will be seen how truly He was 'The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.' For then, and not till then will sin have disappeared absolutely and all its active consequences. The wicked having been judged and cast forever into the lake of fire, as well as Satan and his angels, righteousness will then be the footing of God's relationship with the world, not sinlessness as at first, nor dealings in Christ in view of sin as since and now, but all things made new."*

This is wonderfully illustrated by that blessed word which came from the lips of the Lamb of God, before He bowed His head and dismissed His Spirit—"It is finished." We find it first in Prophecy in the twenty-second Psalm. That Psalm begins with the cry of the forsaken one, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" the very words which came from His lips when the waves and billows of divine wrath swept over Him. The Psalm ends with a statement which is the equivalent of "It is finished"—"He hath done." And between the bitter cry of the cross in the first verse of this Psalm, and the exultant declaration of the last, we read of those who are His brethren (the Church), that Israel too will be saved by Him, that the ends of the earth will turn unto the Lord, and that He will get the Kingdoms of the earth. Still more striking is the use of this expression, "It is done," which is practically the same as "It is finished," in the book of Revelation. When the seventh Angel pours out his vial, in which the wrath of God is finished (marking the end of the great tribulation) we read that a great voice out of the temple in glory, from the throne said, "It is done." With this event the Lord returns and takes possession of the earth and the kingdoms become His kingdom. The last time "It is done" is used is in Revelation xxi:6. "And He said unto me, It is done." When? When the new heaven and the new earth are come. And of "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." It is then that the voice is heard, "Behold I make all things new—It is done." Only then will the meaning of John's great message be completely fulfilled, "The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."

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*Wm. Kelly on John.

Let us not overlook the fact that the text does not speak of the "sins of the world," but of "sin." While it is perfectly true that the work of the Cross is sufficient to save the whole world, that the blood was shed for the sin of the world, it is only of those who believe that we read that Christ bore their sins in His body. But some have said that because Christ made atonement for all, and is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, the whole world will be ultimately saved. "I have no doubt," says an able expositor, "from Scripture, that the vast majority of the world's inhabitants will be found at last to have received no benefit from Christ, and to have died in their sins. I repudiate the idea of universal salvation as a dangerous heresy and utterly contrary to Scripture. But the lost will not prove to be lost because Christ did nothing for them." He died for the ungodly, and for all there is the possibility of the offer of a free and full salvation; those who refuse must die in their sins, and die as if Christ had not died for them.

And then John the Baptist must have pointed to Him, the Lamb of God, saying, This is the One of whom I bore witness yesterday, of whom I told you. After me cometh a man, who is come to be before me. Here He stands Himself, He who was before me!

Then he witnesses concerning what had taken place at the Baptism of our Lord. He who sent John to baptize with water had given to him this sign, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, He it is who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit." When and how John received this sign from God we do not know; he had no doubt many revelations from God, but they have not been placed on record. And so it was when the Son of God came out of Jordan, heaven was opened unto Him, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove out of heaven and then abode upon Him. As we read in the Gospel of Luke, "The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove," from which some conclude that it was not necessarily a real dove, but a bodily shape resembling a dove in its downward flight. The dove is a beautiful emblem of the Holy Spirit, and also a type as we have it in connection with the flood and Noah. The Holy Spirit came on the Son of God and found His resting place there. This is the Anointing which He received. It is foreshadowed in the meal offering, that consisted of a cake of fine flour mingled with oil, with no leaven in it. This typifies the holy, spotless humanity of our Lord, produced by the Holy Spirit. And before the meal offering was baked and exposed to the fire, the type of the sufferings of Christ, oil was poured upon it (Levit. ii). But the great fact before us in this statement is not so much that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, but that He is the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit. There is perfect order in this great revelation in the first chapter of this Gospel. The Deity of our Lord stands first, He is the Word, the eternal One. Then we heard that the Word was made flesh, His incarnation, that He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, His sacrificial work, and now besides accomplishing redemption, He is the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit. For this He received the Holy Spirit as man, so that he might be the giver of Him to others. And He gives the Holy Spirit to His own who have received Him and accepted Him as Saviour; such are baptized by His Spirit into the Body of Christ.

It is of great interest to note the difference in the announcement of John the Baptist as reported in the Gospel of Matthew and in the Gospel of John. In the kingly Gospel, where John's ministry as the herald of the King in proclaiming the nearness of the promised kingdom is more fully given, John makes the following announcement: He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire, whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew iii). And here in the Gospel of John only one sentence is given, "He it is who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit." It does not say here "Who baptizeth *you* with the Holy Spirit." It seems clear that the words in the Gospel of Matthew must be considered as having some special relation to Israel. The nation has in the Old Testament a promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (See Joel ii:28, etc.) The fire which John speaks of is not the gift of the Holy Spirit, but the fire Baptism means Judgment which is connected with His second coming. All this fits beautifully into the Gospel of Matthew, which is so prominently dispensational. Not a word of it is mentioned in the Gospel of John. Nor is it said here, "He *shall* baptize *you*," but "He baptizeth with the Holy Spirit."

The statement of John "I knew Him not" has been called by some a contradiction on account of Matthew iii:14, "John said unto Him, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest Thou to me?" Different ways of explaining this difficulty have been suggested. John evidently did not know Him perfectly as to His Person, though he had a deep impression as to His holiness when He came to be baptized by him. But when He had been baptized, and the sign was fulfilled by which John was to know Him as the Christ, and the giver of the Spirit, then he knew Him fully. Therefore he declares, "I have seen and borne witness that He is the Son of God." And yet a short time later when John is in prison he sent two of his disciples to the Lord with the question, "Art Thou He that cometh or look we for another?" (Matthew xi:3). It shows that John the Baptist, though filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb, was subject to like passions as we are (James v:17).

Verses 35-39. And now comes another day. On the previous day John the Baptist had pointed out the Lord as "The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Such is the testimony of the Old Testament to Christ and His work in redemption. When John announced Him thus he spoke as a witness of the Old Dispensation. But now comes another day on which John announced Him again, and unlike the previous day, there is now direct result from his testimony in the gathering of disciples to Christ. When we turn to verse 43 we find a second day mentioned; on that second day Nathanael is brought to the feet of the Lord. In the second chapter "the third day" begins; on that day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee.

These three days have an interesting typical meaning which we mention before we follow the text. The day on which John heralds Christ with the words, "Behold the Lamb of God!" on which disciples follow Christ, dwell with Him in an unknown, a secret abode, is the type of the present age, after Israel rejected the message of the Lamb of God. In type we see what takes place during this age in the gathering of His own, which constitute the Church.

When that is concluded the second day comes. Nathanael unbelieving, is a type of the Jew, more strictly speaking, of those Jews who are God-fearing, still waiting for Messiah. Nathanael gets a demonstration of the Deity of Him of whom he said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Then he believes on Him as the Son of God, the King of Israel. That comes and takes place after the Church is completed.

On the third day there was a marriage in Cana. The Lord Jesus was there, His mother, His disciples,and then He manifested His Glory. That third day stands typically for the coming age of glory, when the water will be turned into wine.

On this day (verse 35) John stood and two of his disciples were with him. A short distance away the Lord Jesus was taking a walk, the Creator of all things moved about the fields. How lovely He must have been as in meekness and lowliness, in unspeakable loveliness, He walked along! John is enraptured by the sight, for he knew Him; and so he gives a second testimony. "Behold the Lamb of God." Behold Him, how lovely He is! Behold Him whom the Father has sent! Behold Him who will ere long be the Lamb of God in sacrifice! He bears witness to His Person and to His Work. He is the Son of God and the Sin-bearer. And this is the great message of the Gospel for this present age, the message concerning the Son of God and His work, the work of the Cross, where the Lamb of God died for the ungodly. It is the core-truth of Christianity; omit it and Christianity is reduced to a religious, ethical system of no more value or meaning than Confucianism. But the message of the Christ, the Son of God and the Lamb of God, carries with it power. There is a physical law of attraction in God's creation, the law of attraction through the message of the Lamb of God works in the spiritual realm, because the Spirit of Life and power operates in and through it. Oh! the blindness that men claiming to be teachers of Christianity do not see this and substitute the Devil's counterfeits in the place of the one message which has power, which attracts, which saves.

We see it working on this first day, the beginning of the gathering of the disciples to Him who is the Center, who is all. These two disciples (Andrew and probably John, the author of this Gospel) heard the brief message. They heard the Word of God. Then as they heard, faith took hold of their hearts, for faith cometh by hearing, and having heard and believed they followed Jesus. And this is the way of salvation.

A God-given Saviour, a God-given message, a God-given power through that message in touching the dead condition of the human soul: Hearing, Believing and then Fellowship with Him, the Lamb of God. That is how the first disciples were brought to Christ and that is the way the Church has been gathered ever since, and is still being gathered. And now He turns. He knew them, He knew their hearts; yea, from before the foundation of the world He knew these two and that just such a scene as this would take place and that they would form the beginning of His Church; and, beloved reader, He knew us also as He knew these two, that we too would hear, believe and follow Him. And so He turns and says unto them, "What seek ye?" They address Him as Rabbi,* Teacher, accustomed to do so as the disciples of John and by Jewish usage. Rabbi, where dwellest

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*The parenthetical statement giving the meaning of this Hebrew word shows that the Gospel was written for Gentiles more than for Jews. It is the same in other places of this Gospel, when ignorance of Hebrew or Aramaic is supposed.

Thou? Where dost Thou abide? The word "Dwell" is the same as the word "Abide" used elsewhere in this Gospel. (vi:27; xv). They want to be with Him, to share His abiding place. Their wish is granted. He speaks the first great word recorded as coming from His lips in this Gospel, "Come and see."

Three little words, yet how inexhaustible they are! Come! That is the royal word of Grace. He used this word long before He ever appeared in the form of man. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord (the same Lord who speaks here); though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i:18). At the crossroads, when His people were beginning to reject the Kingdom offer and He pronounced His woe upon Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, we hear Him say, "Come unto Me." Zacchaeus in the sycamore tree, with a burdened, longing soul, hears it. "Make haste, come down." And the "comes" in this Gospel! "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (vi:37); and again, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (xiv:6). "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." "Come, for all things are now ready." And we also have heard this royal word of Grace. We came and we have seen; we have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Some day we shall see—we shall see Him as He is, not as the two disciples saw Him, in the garb of humiliation, but we shall see Him in His Glory and then abide in His abode, the Father's house with its many mansions.

All this is blessedly foreshadowed in this first event in the Gospel of John. They came, following Him, and abode with Him in the place unnamed and unknown to others. It typifies that place in Him which the believer has, the fellowship with Him, which belongs to all who trust in Him. And there they were for the night; they spent the night with Him. Perhaps the abode was outside in some shack, for He had not where to lay His head. But some one may say the night is not mentioned. It says they abode with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour, about four in the afternoon; hence it must have been the entire night they spent in His fellowship. As another has said, "No night is mentioned, for where He is, it is day." And so those gathering to Him, His true Church, abide in Him and with Him during the night, this present age, and when the morning breaks on that coming day His own shall come forth with Him and then share that abiding place of Glory with Him forever.

Verses 40-42. How this company is to be gathered and built and increased is seen in this paragraph. This simple story is the pattern of soul-winning and leading others to Christ. Andrew was one of them who had followed the Lord and enjoyed His fellowship. How he must have thought that night of his own brother Simon and wished that he too might be in that fellowship.

The first thing he did when morning came, he went and sought out his brother Simon and brought him the good news: "We have found the Messiah." He took him by the hand and brought him to Jesus. To his own brother Andrew, Simon, surnamed Peter, owes the knowledge of becoming acquainted with the Lord Jesus.

"The fact before us is most striking and instructive. Out of the three first members of the Christian Church, one at least was brought to Jesus by the private, quiet word of a relative. He seems to have heard no public preaching. He saw no mighty miracle wrought. He was not convinced by any powerful reasoning. He only heard his brother telling him that he had found a Saviour himself, and at once the work began in his soul. The simple testimony of a warm-hearted brother was the first link in the chain by which Peter was drawn out of the world and joined to Christ. The first blow in that mighty work by which Peter was made a pillar of the Church was struck by Andrew's words, 'We have found the Christ.'

"Well would it be for the Church of Christ if all believers were more like Andrew! Well would it be for souls if all men and women who have been converted themselves, would speak to their friends and relatives on spiritual subjects, and tell them what they have found! How much good might be done! How many might be led to Jesus, who now live and die in unbelief! The work of testifying the Gospel of the grace of God ought not to be left to ministers alone. All who have received mercy ought to find a tongue, and to declare what God has done for their souls. All who have been delivered from the power of the devil ought to 'go home and tell their friends what great things God has done for them' (Mark v:19). Thousands, humanly speaking, would listen to a word from a friend who will not listen to a sermon. Every believer ought to be a home missionary—a missionary to his family, children, servants, neighbors and friends. Surely, if we can find nothing to say to others about Jesus we may well doubt whether we are savingly acquainted with Him ourselves."*

And Simon, true to his name (which means "hearing"), heard at once. And when the Lord looked upon him He said, "Thou art Simon the son of Jonas ("the dove"); thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, being interpreted, a stone" (Greek, Petros-Peter). But does this not clash with Matthew xvi where the Lord calls Simon Peter by his name at an entirely different occasion, that is, at Cesarea Philippi, after Simon's great confession of Him as the Son of the living God?

But let us notice, in answering this supposed discrepancy, that the Lord here at first meeting Simon speaks of the future. It is the language of prophecy, "Thou shalt be called Cephas," this will be your name some day. The knowledge of Simon the Lord here displays is that of omniscience. He knew who he was and told him here of what He intended to make of him. That name is then fully revealed in its meaning in Matthew xvi. He is, of course, not the Rock upon which the Church is built, that is Christ the risen Son of God, but Peter was a stone, one of the living stones of which the Church is composed (1 Peter ii:4).

The word Cephas is Aramaic, Peter from Petros is Greek. It has been pointed out by church historians that three popes were so ignorant that they supposed that the word "Cephas" in Greek means "Head," mistaking it for the Greek "Cephale." Upon this ignorance these popes build their wicked assertion that Peter is the head of the Church. Even the great Cardinal Bellarmine made the same blunder.

Verses 43-51. A second day follows, and on that day the

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*Bishop Ryle.

Lord Himself called one to follow Him. He found Philip and said unto him, "Follow Me." Philip and Nathanael who was first unbelieving, give us a most interesting dispensational picture. As we pointed out, the previous gathering of disciples, upon the testimony "Behold the Lamb of God," and their abode with the Lord, gives a prophetic picture of what takes place during the present age, the gathering of His Church. Philip and Nathanael typify the calling of the remnant of Israel, after the true Church is gathered and her testimony ended.

Philip means "lover of horses." We noticed once in New Mexico a Spanish church building named "San Filipe"—"St. Philip's Church." On the outside wall had been painted a race-horse with outstretched neck toward the goal. Whoever caused that race-horse to be painted understood well the meaning of the Greek word Philip.

He represents that portion of the people Israel, who during the tribulation period will hear the call of the King and then with outstretched neck, like a race-horse, press on towards the goal, when the King comes back to deliver them. And through this believing remnant a testimony will be given to others, who are still unbelieving. This is represented by Philip finding Nathanael. Philip's testimony is different from the testimony which John the Baptist bore. "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Philip voices the belief of the Jews of his times. They knew that God had given them through Moses and the prophets a revelation, and in that revelation He had promised to them a Saviour-King, the Messiah. The baptised infidels in the professing church, who call themselves "Modernists" deny both, the fact of revelation and the prophecies concerning a Messiah.

The testimony which Philip gave to Nathanael has even been used by these rationalists as an evidence against the Virgin birth of our Lord. Did not Philip say that Jesus of Nazareth is the son of Joseph? The supposed inconsistency of this statement, and the account of Christ's supernatural birth as given by Matthew and Luke, is purely imaginary. Philip was ignorant of the birth of Christ. Like others he heard of Him as "the carpenter's son" (see Matt. xiii:54-57).

Nathanael (which means "the gift of God") was, like Philip, an expecting Jew, who did not deny the fact of prophecy, centering in the Messiah, the son of David, as the hope of God's people. But he was shocked when Philip spoke to him of that promised One as of Nazareth. Had he said—Jesus, the Son of David, of Bethlehem, Judah, Nathanael would have spoken differently. It would have arrested his attention immediately. But when Philip mentioned Nazareth, Nathanael said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" In the Greek there is a scornful emphasis on the word Nazareth. Nazareth was an insignificant village. Its inhabitants were called "Am-horatzin"—ignorant country people. They were of low origin and unbelieving (Mark vi:5-6). They were rough and violent, so that they were ready to murder Him, who was brought up in their midst (Luke iv:28). No wonder Nathanael was greatly disturbed when his friend spoke to him of the Messiah coming from such a place. With the rest of his contemporaries he looked for the Messiah as the conquering King, coming from David's city to establish His kingdom; the story of His rejection, as revealed also by the prophets, he knew not. He is a type of that class of Jews during the very end of the present age, who are still ignorant of the identity of the coming King, and who stumble at His humiliation, but whose eyes will be opened, as Nathanael's eyes were opened.

Philip ignored Nathanael's objection. He invites him to come and to see. Well has it been said, "Personal experience is the best test of the truth of Christianity." While all this was going on the Lord Jesus knew all about it. He knew Nathanael; He knew his sincerity, his faith in the Word and promises of the God of Abraham; He knew his character and the secrets of his heart.

Nathanael was ready to do what Philip had asked. He was moving towards the Lord Jesus, who must have stood not far away. And as Nathanael neared to Jesus, He greeted him with the words "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." The omniscient Lord knew him as a true believer in whom the Holy Spirit had wrought His work (Rom. ii:28, 29; Gal. iii:29, vi:15, 16; Ps. xv, xxxii:1-3). Nathanael is amazed at such a greeting. It was the first time he had looked into the face of the Lord Jesus. Where did He have the knowledge as to his own person? "Whence knowest Thou me?" This question gives the Lord the opportunity to say something more startling than the previously uttered description of Nathanael's state of soul. The Lord said, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." The Lord had first demonstrated to Nathanael His supernatural insight, and now He reveals His supernatural sight, His omniscience and His omnipresence, both of which show that He is God. What happened under that fig tree is a secret. Only the Lord and Nathanael know what it was, and the Holy Spirit has withheld the revelation of what took place. But we may surmise that Nathanael spent some time beneath that fig tree in deep soul exercise; perhaps he made an important decision relating to his spiritual life, on account of which the Lord had called him an Israelite indeed. Nor must we overlook the fact that what transpired was under the fig tree, which is one of the emblems of the people Israel. Perhaps in his musings, Nathanael, as a Messiah expecting Jew, had earnestly desired to know the Messiah. Many God-fearing Jews were convinced at that time that the promised King must soon appear in their midst.

With such a manifestation of Deity which the Lord Jesus had given to Nathanael his prejudice falls to the ground and he bursts out in ecstasy, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." Perhaps the Spirit of God brought suddenly before the heart of this believing Israelite the second Psalm, in which the Sonship of the Messiah and His Kingship is announced. He therefore confessed his belief in Him as the promised Christ. The full meaning of what he was saying, he probably knew not. And the Lord Jesus Christ did not correct him, but accepted the worship of Nathanael. Renan and other unbelievers in the Deity of our Lord advanced the theory that the belief that Christ is God was the outgrowth of His followers' admiration towards the end of His ministry, and that it was then tacitly accepted by Christ. But here He accepts the titles of Son of God and King of Israel in the very beginning of His ministry.

Like Nathanael, that portion of Israel which still holds to the promises of God as to the Messiah, will receive the demonstration, during the closing years of this present age, that the rejected and despised One, whom their fathers delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, the rejected Stone and stone of stumbling and offence, is the Son of God, the King of Israel.

In answer to Nathanael's confession, the Lord assured him that he would see greater things. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." These words are generally spiritualized. It is pointed out, and rightly so, that here is a reference to Jacob's vision, when he saw heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder. Then the application is made that Christ is the ladder for the sinner to ascend into heaven, thus the angels are used as types of sinners, and of spiritual blessings, which come to earth through Christ. The meaning is a different one. The words of the Lord are prophetic.

In the first place the word "hereafter," it is claimed, should be omitted. This is the opinion of such prominent scholars, whose knowledge of manuscripts is trustworthy, as Tischendorf and Alford. If we omit it, it reads "Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." It could then be applied to both, the present and the future. But they did not see the angels of God ascending and descending during His life time. They were ministering to Him, but Nathanael did not behold this ministry at any time.

The present therefore is excluded. It is the matter of the future. The words of our Lord will be literally fulfilled in the day of His visible, glorious return to the earth. Then heaven will be opened and He will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire and with His holy Angels, who will be His attendants in that great event. We refer the reader to the book by the author on "The Angels of God," in which this interesting truth is more fully developed.

CHAPTER II.

Verses 1-11. It was probably the third day after Nathanael had believed on the Lord as the Son of God and the King of Israel, when the marriage in Cana of Galilee took place. But there is another meaning to this third day, which we point out in our exposition. From Chapter xxi:2, we learn that Nathanael was of Cana, a small place not very far from Nazareth; possibly our Lord visited this place on the invitation of the new disciple. Whose marriage it was which took place in Cana we do not know, for there is nothing said about it. Wicked Mormonism teaches that it was the marriage of our Lord! But the mother of Jesus was there and Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage. By accepting the invitation to attend this marriage, a feast of joy and gladness, our Lord fully endorsed what He Himself as the Creator had instituted. For it was He who said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. ii:18). And the first Adam and his bride are types of the second Man and the Church, as Eve was of the body of the man and also his bride. And now the marriage relation on true Christian ground is a precious symbol of Christ and the Church (Ephesians v). How contradictory are the miserable inventions of Romanism on this point. The Romish church on the one hand decries marriage, speaks of it as fleshly and imperfect, and then advocates celibacy. On the other hand Rome has made marriage a sacrament, because the Lord Jesus attended this wedding feast. That there should be such perversions as to the divinely instituted state of matrimony was foreseen by the Holy Spirit, for we read in 1 Timothy iv:3, "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." This prophecy has found its fulfillment in the Romish church.

And when they wanted wine at the marriage, His mother, who seemed to have been at home in the place where the marriage took place, said to Him, "They have no wine."

Why did she say this and appeal thus to Him? Different answers have been given. Luther's comment is as follows: "Mary thinks He is so good and gracious, that it needs no petition; I will only inform Him what is wanting, and He Himself will do more than we can ask." Others like Bengel suggest that it was a hint from her that He and His disciples might withdraw and not embarass the house. But that seems unreasonable. Mary knew who He was. She knew that He is the incarnate Son of God whom, as to His human body, she conceived by the Holy Spirit, and though He had not yet worked miracles and manifested His Power and His Glory, she believed that He could supply all the need at that feast. And He fully understood what was in her heart, what she meant, that she tried to induce Him to act. Would He then, the infallible Son of God, take his orders from His mother? He at once utters a word of reproof. "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come!" Romanists have tried hard to explain away this word of correction but they have all failed in doing it. The rebuke shows her error, her mistake. He did not want her to interfere with His Work. Well saith Bishop Ryle, "She erred here, perhaps from an affectionate desire to bring honor to her Son, as she erred on other occasions. The words were meant to remind her that she must henceforth leave our Lord to choose His own times and modes of acting. The season of subjection to her and to Joseph was over. The season of His public ministry had at length begun. In carrying on that ministry, she must not presume to suggest to Him. The utter contrariety of this verse to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church about the Virgin Mary is too palpable to be explained away. She was not without error and sin, as Roman writers have dared to assert, and was not meant to be prayed to and adored. If our Lord would not allow His mother even to suggest to Him the working of a miracle, we may well suppose that all Roman Catholic prayers to the Virgin Mary, and epecially prayers entreating her to "command her Son" are most offensive and blasphemous in His eyes."

And Mary accepted the reproof and spoke a word which shows her submission, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." She tried to command Him and now she urges the servants to do whatsoever *He* saith. It might be called the "commandment of Mary" and be pointed out to Romanists, in helping them to see the true Gospel.

Then He speaks. The six water-pots are filled at His command with water to the brim. He commands again to draw out and to bring it to the governor of the feast. He tasted what was offered unto him and found that the liquid which he tasted was not water, nor water and wine mixed, but pure and excellent wine. He then told the bridegroom that he has kept the good wine till the last, contrary to the usual custom of serving the best wine first and the worst wine last.

It was a miracle. While in the previous chapter our Lord manifested His Divine Omniscience, here He reveals Himself as the Omnipotent Creator. The Creator's power was needed to accomplish what was done in the twinkling of an eye. He needed no grapes, no mellowing process, nothing whatever. His power made the wine, and thus in the beginning of miracles He manifested forth His Glory. In the previous chapter we read that the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ. Moses' first miracle was the turning of water into blood, typical of the ministration of the law unto death; and our Lord's first miracle was turning water into wine, typical of the joy and the ministration of Grace. Wine is the symbol of joy and gladness; surely His Love is better than wine. It is the emblem of His own precious blood which He gave on the Cross, when He was poured out like water. And He keeps the good wine last. How different from the world! It gives that which man esteems good first, and then the bitterness and disappointment. His people have tribulation in the world, from which His grace saved them, but in it all the real joy and peace which comes in believing. And finally there comes a day, the day of His Coming, when we shall see Him as He is, and then we shall find out how true it is, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now!" What joy and glory, then, when we shall drink anew with Him in His own presence!

And what is the dispensational application of this first miracle? Let us remember that the marriage was on the third day. We believe this third day relates to the two days marked off in the first chapter of this Gospel. As we pointed out, on that first day the two disciples followed the Lord and dwelled with Him, a blessed type of the Church and what is going on throughout this age—the preaching of the message, Behold the Lamb of God, and the gathering of His Church around Himself. Then the second day, on which Nathanael believed, the type of the Jewish remnant. The third day brings us to the consummation, when Israel is restored to her former relationship with the Lord, when they will be received back. It is the day of which Hosea so beautifully writes when he records Israel's future confession, "After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight" (Hosea vi:1-3). The mother of Jesus, who is at the feast, typifies Israel; the disciples who come with the Lord represent the church-saints, with whom He comes when Israel's time of blessing and glory has come. The marriage here must not be identified with the marriage of the Lamb in Revelation xix. Some apply that marriage scene also to Israel, and make the Lamb's wife the reinstated Israel. But the marriage in Revelation xix takes place *in heaven* and not on earth; it is the Church which, symbolically speaking, becomes the Lamb's wife. The marriage of Israel takes place on earth and is an earthly scene of glory.

And up to now His hour is not yet come. But all is waiting for that third day. When it comes, the sad, deplorable history of Israel and mankind will be reversed. The best wine will then be given, and it will not fail when He is upon the Throne. And let us note it will be the beginning of miracles, the manifestation of His Glory. What glory will then follow! Yet the whole earth will be filled with His Glory.

Verses 12-17. From Cana He went down to Capernaum, which was situated on the lake of Galilee. There our Lord seems to have spent much of His time and worked some of His great miracles. Yet Capernaum was unbelieving and rejected Him, as we learn from Matthew. "Then He pronounced judgment upon the city" (Matt. xi:23). His mother and brethren accompanied Him, but He did not abide there many days. Here for the first time "His brethren" are mentioned in the Gospel. We read of them in the seventh chapter that they did not believe on Him (vii:5). In the first chapter in the Book of Acts we receive the information that they were among the waiting company, so that they had believed on Him. There is no certainty about these brethren of our Lord. Some claim they were the sons of Joseph by a former marriage. The Apostle James is also called the Lord's brother (Gal. i:19) and yet he was the son of Alpheus or Cleophas, the husband of the Virgin Mary's sister. In Mark vi:3 their names are given.

The Passover being at hand He went up to Jerusalem. John does not call it the feast of Passover, or unleavened bread, as Matthew does, but John writes, "the Jews' passover." He uses this expression because this Gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem and the complete setting aside of the nation. Their feasts are now no longer "the feasts of Jehovah" but their own feasts and ordinances. The Apostle John exclusively mentions this particular Passover, when He entered the temple and cleansed the house. It must not be identified with the other cleansing of the temple recorded in Matthew xxi:12, 13; Mark xi:15; Luke xix:45. The cleansing of the temple which the synoptic Gospels give is the cleansing which took place during His last visit to Jerusalem; John reports the cleansing of the temple in connection with His first visit to Jerusalem in the beginning of His ministry. Here He made a scourge, but at the cleansing of the temple during His final visit to Jerusalem no scourge is mentioned at all.

The courtyard of the temple when our Lord entered was filled with those who sold oxen, sheep and doves to those who came to bring the appointed sacrifices, while others changed foreign coin. The whole scene shows the profanation of the house of the Lord, the divinely appointed place of worship for God's earthly people. It showed the state of heart in which the Jewish people were. Their holiest functions had become commercialized, the house of the Lord had been degraded to a house of merchandise. Such was the spiritual condition of Israel. It is not better today in professing Christendom. We do not mean to say by this that a "church building" is the same as the house of the Lord. True worship is not in a house, with an altar and a priesthood such as Israel possessed. The words of our Lord to the woman of Samaria will open this more fully to our hearts. Ritualistic Christendom looks upon a building set apart for religious meetings as a holy place and patterns everything after the earthly house of worship which the Jews possessed. Protestantism has followed the same error in calling a place set apart for preaching of the Gospel, prayer and the ministry of the Word, the house of the Lord, as if He dwelt in a special manner in such a building. To speak of a "church building" as the courts of the Lord, His dwelling place, His house, a temple, etc., is the language of the Philistine, and should never be used by those who are called to worship in the Holiest where He has entered, made nigh by His own precious blood, and who are enabled to worship in Spirit and in Truth by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

But it is equally true that in a place set apart for prayer and the ministry of the Word, the place where the holy things of our faith are ministered, a spirit of quietness, reverence and decency should be maintained. How the so-called "churches" with all their high sounding names have become houses of merchandise, places of amusements, theatricals, moving picture shows, political conventions, different shows, including dancing for the young people, etc., we need not dwell upon at length. It is a worse profanation than the profanation of Israel's house in the day our Lord stepped into its court. It shows that those who profess Christianity have made common cause with the world and know nothing of that separation which God demands of His redeemed people. The ministry of the Word, evangelistic campaigns led by evangelists who have "incorporated," aiming at big collections to which Saints and Sinners, Jews and Gentiles, are urged to give, the different schemes to raise big sums of money, all these are greater evils than the selling of oxen and sheep in the temple court of Israel. It is unholy trafficking in the Truth of God.

The scourge He made was probably used to drive out the animals. Nothing is said that He used the whip on the persons. His person was sufficient to strike terror into the hearts of these traffickers. How His eyes must have flashed with holy indignation! It has been pointed out that in this transaction He used more physical force than at any other time. "Here we see Him doing no less than four things: (1) Making the scourge. (2) Driving out the animals. (3) Pouring out on the ground the changers' money. (4) Overthrowing the tables."

Then came from His lips, the lips into which Grace was poured (Psalm xlv), the scathing rebuke "Take these things hence! Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise!" In comparing His words here with the words He spoke at the cleansing of the temple three years later, we notice that here He speaks of His Father's house; three years later He said "My house." That He mentioned here the temple as "My Father's house" is another witness of our Lord to His Sonship. In Chapter v:18, He bears the same witness and then the Jews were ready to stone Him. But here His majestic, holy indignation strikes terror to their hearts and they flee His presence. And when three years later our Lord found the same conditions He said, "Ye have made it a den of thieves." The profanation had increased at a fearful rate so that the house had become a den of thieves.

And the incident has a striking dispensational, prophetic meaning. It foreshadows that cleansing which will take place when He comes again and manifests His Glory. The Jews in the future will erect another temple in Jerusalem where once more sacrifices will be brought, which are to the Lord an abomination, for they are the expression of their unbelief and apostasy (Isaiah lxvi:1-4). This will be during the time of Jacob's trouble, when the unbelieving part of the Jews are following and worshipping the Man of Sin. At that time the abomination will be set up in Jerusalem, that image of which we read in Revelation xiii. (See Daniel xii:11; Matthew xxiv:15). But when the Lord returns He will cleanse Jerusalem and purge it with the spirit of burning, that is judgment (Isaiah iv). Of this time of cleansing the Prophet Zechariah speaks. "In that day shall there be . . . every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein, and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. xiv:21). The word Canaanite means "trafficker." The house and the nation will be cleansed. But when He comes again His wrath will be manifested, foreshadowed in the small scourge He made of cords. It will be the wrath of the Lamb (Psalm ii:12; Rev. vi:16). And this wrath will be displayed not only against idolatrous Judaism but against apostate Christendom as well. The disciples remembered what is written in the Psalm, "the zeal of thine house has eaten me up." It shows how well they were acquainted with the Word of God and the Spirit of God taught them the application of this Scripture. We find it in the sixty-ninth Psalm, the Psalm which is so frequently quoted in the New Testament Scriptures as a prophecy of our Lord in His humiliation and suffering.

Verses 18-22. It is significant that there was no protest from the side of the Jews against the action of our Lord. They evidently recognized the wrong in having defiled the house of the Lord. But they questioned His authority. Had he credentials that He is authorized to do this? If He is really divinely commissioned let him prove it by signs! This was their demand. But instead of working a miracle, which He might have done, He spoke a word which was an enigma to them. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He did not mean the temple buildings, but the temple, His body, which He the Lord of all had taken on. In that body dwelt the Son of God, as in the bodies of God's children the Holy Spirit dwells. This is the answer He gave. His body would be killed but He would raise this temple in three days. He spoke these words as the omnipotent Son of God who has the power to lay down His life and the power to take it again (John x:18). Not only did the Father raise Him from the dead, but He arose by His own power.

The Jews did not understand what He meant. They thought only of the temple building, which Herod had rebuilt and repaired. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, at the time our Lord was in Jerusalem it was exactly forty-six years that this work had been going on. Nor did His disciples grasp the meaning of these words of our Lord. But when He was risen from the dead they remembered it and then believed the Scripture through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who showed unto them the things of Christ. The last three verses belong properly to the next chapter, with which a new section of this Gospel begins.

Verses 23-25. These closing verses of the second chapter form an introduction to the great teachings which now follow, and which are so characteristic of the Gospel of John, namely, the unfolding of the truth concerning eternal life, how it is imparted to man, and what goes with it. Here we have first of all a picture of the condition of man and how he is in need of a new nature, and must be born again. He was in Jerusalem during Passover, and at that time He did miracles by which He manifested His Power and Glory. These miracles were the credentials of King Messiah. They were the signs of the Kingdom. As a result of these signs He wrought many believed on His name; they therefore conceded Him to be the Messiah, the Son of David, the promised King; the miracles were evidences to them of the true Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. But while they believed on His Name, not as Son of God, but as Messiah, He did not commit (or trust) Himself to them. Their faith was not such as affected their moral nature, not a faith which is expressed in complete submission to Him, or which opens the heart to receive Him. While they were fully convinced that He who did these miracles is the Messiah, their hearts were untouched. It was an intellectual belief which could assent to outward evidence, but which felt no need of a Saviour and would not own the real condition before God. It is an illustration of what the natural man is; how spiritually dead he is. The Lord Jesus looked through these men. Because He is God He knows the hearts of all the children of men (1 Kings viii:39). He is the searcher of hearts, who alone can sound the desperately wicked depths of the human soul.

CHAPTER III

Verses 1-3. We are now introduced to one of this class, who believed, because he had seen the miracles of the Lord, and yet he seemed to have a deeper desire than the others; this desire led Nicodemus to interview the Lord personally. He was a Pharisee, which was an honored sect among the Jews, known for their extreme religiousness in keeping the law, as well as the traditions of the elders, the interpretations of that law. How the Pharisees as the religious-ritualistic class hated and opposed the Lord Jesus, and how they finally made common cause with the Saduccees, the rationalistic school, in rejecting Christ, the synoptic Gospels fully reveal. But here is a Pharisee whose heart is touched. And he was a ruler among the Jews, he held a high ecclesiastical position in his nation, a position which demanded a clean, moral character. We find a third description of this man in verse 10. The Lord addressed him as "the teacher in Israel." He had the reputation in his generation of being a leading, deeply educated teacher, to whom the people looked for instruction and guidance. That such a prominent teacher lived in the days of our Lord is confirmed by the Jews. He was a leading member of the Sanhedrim and a man of much wealth. In Talmudical literature he is mentioned as Nicodemus Ben Gorion, an outstanding figure in Jewish economy of the first Century.*

He sought the Lord Jesus by night. Twice more this fact is emphasized in this Gospel (chapters vii:50, xix:39). While he had an earnest longing for the truth, which made him take a great risk, he was at the same time timid, fearing the scorn and condemnation of his co-religionists.

Before he ever made his appearance before the Lord Jesus in that memorable night, the Lord knew him. He knew what burdened his heart; he knew the longing of his heart. The conversation which follows is of great importance and deserves very careful study. Some have asked why only John records this important event. The reason is very clear. He was commissioned to write the Gospel document which shows our Lord as the true God and the eternal Life, with power to give eternal Life, a truth which the Holy Spirit held back from the pen of the three preceding Evangelists. The conversation with Nicodemus, the great truths our Lord here teaches concerning the new birth, form the proper starting point for the unfolding of the great theme of the fourth Gospel. Others have asked where John got the correct information from to write an accurate account of the night visit of the great Pharisee, especially since some forty years had gone by since it took place. This question has been well answered by another. "How any one can waste time, as some famous commentators do, in speculating how the conversation between Christ and Nicodemus was reported, is to my mind perfectly astonishing. To hint, as one has done, that Jesus must have told John about the conversation afterwards, or that John must have been present, appears to me to strike a blow at the very root of inspiration. Both here and elsewhere, frequently, John describes things which he only knew by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit" (Bishop Ryle).

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*See Jewish Encyclopedia Vol. IX, page 300.

Nicodemus addressed the Lord as "Rabbi"—which means "Master" or Teacher, and then said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God (literally rendered, "From God thou hast come a teacher") for no one can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Most likely Nicodemus had a strong impression that Jesus must be the Messiah, yet he was cautious and made therefore an attempt to know more about Him and by private conversation.

And the Lord answered him at once without permitting Nicodemus to continue his address. What was in Nicodemus's heart? About what did he intend to speak to the Lord? We read how the Lord answered him, and what our Lord said gives us a hint of what was in the heart of Nicodemus. The Lord anticipated his question, and at once touches upon the whole matter which had exercised his mind. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus came to inquire concerning the kingdom. Messiah and the kingdom were inseparably associated in the Jewish mind. If this Man does miracles, as He did, is He the Messiah, and, if He is, what about His kingdom? This must have been the supreme thought with Nicodemus. The words our Lord spoke to him indicate this.

The question then arises, What kingdom does our Lord mean when He addressed Nicodemus in this abrupt way? This we must ascertain first, and after that the meaning of being "born again," as well as the mode of this new birth.

The Gospel is often preached, and that rightly so, from the story of Nicodemus. In doing so emphasis is laid upon the great truth that there is only one way into the kingdom, and that is the new birth. But the Gospel preacher generally identifies the kingdom of God with salvation, and speaks of it in the sense of being right with God, getting saved and receiving eternal life, which is all very true. But the original meaning in connection with Nicodemus is quite overlooked. Nicodemus certainly did not understand by the kingdom anything different from that kingdom which the Prophets of his people had predicted. It is the kingdom promised to Israel, the kingdom which is not now, which will come some day and into which Israel will enter. We fully agree with the comment of one of the most spiritual expositors, who knew how to divide the Word of Truth rightly, the late Frederick W. Grant. We quote his words:

"The Kingdom of God was that which the prophets had announced, and for which all Israel waited. We must not think of it in the form it has now taken, the King being away, and its administration being in the hands of men. We must think of it as established by power at the Coming of the Lord, when of Israel alone a remnant will enter it whose character Isaiah explicitly declares (chapter iv:2-4). For 'in that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy; even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning."

Then follows the account of the glory of Jerusalem in millennial days.

"It is certain, therefore, that, when Israel enters the Kingdom, every one will be born again that does so, and it should be clear that this is what a Jew like Nicodemus would expect, and had a right to expect, if taught of the prophets. Of the Christian form of the Kingdom he could know nothing, and could be expected to know nothing; for it was not yet revealed. Nor could the Lord's words even apply to the present time, in which, all the parables declare, a mingled condition of things, tares and wheat together, wise and foolish virgins" (Numerical Bible).

Later in the conversation our Lord expressed surprise over the great teacher's ignorance. "Art thou the teacher in Israel and dost thou not know these things?" It is clearly revealed in the Old Testament prophetic Word that Israel's blessing, restoration and entrance into the future earthly kingdom, which will be set up when King Messiah returns to earth, is intimately connected with the new birth of the remnant of the nation. This is clearly stated in the great restoration chapter in the Book of Ezekiel. After the promise, "I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land," the Holy Spirit promises that for the nation which will be their new birth. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them" (Ezekiel xxxvi:4-28).

While this is true of Israel in the future, that they can never enter in and possess the promised kingdom unless born again, it is equally true of the entrance into the Kingdom of His Son, which is now (Colossians i:13). There is no other way, but the way of being born again. What man is in himself, what he makes of himself, as a religious, a moral nad educated man, such as Nicodemus was, can never bring the soul into the presence and fellowship of a holy God. This is the one unalterable condition for Jew and Gentile, "ye must be born again."

It has often been remarked with what abruptness our Lord treated Nicodemus, interrupting him as He did, and then laying down this great demand as the one great condition of the kingdom. And what a contrast with her of whom we read in the next chapter, the woman at the well! Both needed the new birth, though the one dressed in the garments of his own pharisaical righteousness (only filthy rags), and the other garbed in that of an abandoned woman. Yet He did not speak to the woman of the absolute necessity of the new birth in order to see the kingdom of God. In fact, our Lord did not make a similar statement and demand of any other person apart from Nicodemus. He selected this one man, the natural man at his best, to emphasize the one great need, the new birth.

Verses 4-8. The question which Nicodemus asked of the Lord, after His emphatic statement concerning the new birth, reveals the ignorance of the natural man, though he may be, like Nicodemus, in the eyes of man a great teacher and religious leader. He was just as ignorant as the Samaritan woman who did not know what the Lord meant by "living water." In answer to Nicodemus our Lord enlightens him as to the new birth, that it is a birth of the water and the Spirit, and repeats once more the absolute necessity of such a birth for entrance into the Kingdom of God.

We examine first the very weighty and important statement "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." It was no doubt spoken first of all in answer to the words of Nicodemus: "Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Even if this were possible it would not open the way into the Kingdom of God, for flesh, the fallen nature of man, cannot produce anything but flesh. This is the great truth our Lord makes known in this terse statement. Man enters into the world by the natural generation with a nature of sin, a fallen, corrupt nature. The whole race is by nature unfit to be in the presence of God. Both Jews and Gentiles are under sin and on account of sin the whole world is guilty before God. Out of an unclean thing nothing clean can be brought forth (Job xiv:4). Well may we pause here and think of that other statement in the beginning of this Gospel, in which also the word flesh is used—"the Word was made flesh." If the Son of God was born like any other human being is born (as blasphemers in different colleges and in pulpits of evangelical denominations boldly declare), then He too falls under this statement, that He was born of the flesh and therefore flesh, and hence it would have been impossible for Him to be the Saviour of men. The holy, perfectly holy, sinless character and life of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be explained in any other way than by His virgin birth. We mention this argument here because the destructive critics, with their boast of scholarship, declare that John's Gospel has nothing to say about the supernatural birth of Christ. But of Him it was never true "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," but He was conceived and born by the Holy Spirit of God and therefore holy, without sin, and without the possibility of sinning. Of every other human being it is sadly true, born of the flesh and therefore flesh, sinful and alienated from God.

And this nature of flesh, this corrupt nature, cannot be changed into something better, because it is not good at all and so evil that it can only bring forth evil. The root is corrupt and so must be the fruit. Of this nature the Spirit of God testifies that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." It is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Romans viii:7-8). How important is this truth! Whenever it is denied it will affect the whole Gospel and will lead to the shameful denial of the Truth of God. And because human nature is absolutely corrupt, with nothing good in it, not even the imagined "divine spark" or a faint trace of good, therefore its offspring must be evil and nothing but evil, with no hope of self-improvement; an entirely new nature is needed in order to see the kingdom of God and enter therein. This new nature is the nature produced by the Spirit of God, and therefore a spiritual nature, the divine nature, which only is fit and fitted to be in the presence of Him who bestows it.

This birth is of water and the Spirit, "except a man be born of the water and the Spirit." We could fill many pages with the different views which have been expressed on this sentence. Its application to baptism is the most common and held by many. But this view is totally wrong. The Lord did no more mean baptism in using the term water, than He meant the Lord's supper when in the sixth chapter He speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. If He meant baptism then it would follow very logically that only those who are baptized can enter the Kingdom, and that all those who are baptized must of necessity possess eternal life. Baptism is the figure of death. Romans vi; Colossians ii and I Peter iii:18 bear witness to this; as Paul writes in the sixth chapter of Romans, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" But our Lord here does not speak of death, nor of His death and the believer's death in Him, but he speaks solely of the communication of life in the new birth.

"Christian Baptism was not instituted, nor did the facts exist which it symbolizes, till the Lord died and rose. How, then, could Nicodemus by any possibility anticipate them or understand what the Lord gives as the clearing up of this difficulty as to being born again? Yet the Lord reproached him as "the teacher in Israel" with his slowness of intelligence. That is, he should have known these things, which he could not possibly know if the Lord alluded to a Christian institution as yet undivulged" (W. Kelly). Bishop Ryle of the Church of England, which more or less holds the view that water means baptism, gives a number of excellent reasons why this view is erroneous. We give his six reasons. (1) There is nothing in the words of the text which necessarily requires tc be referred to baptism. (2) The assertion that "water" must mean baptism is an assertion utterly destitute of Scripture proof. It is a mere gratuitous assumption and must fall to the ground. (3) If water means baptism it follows as a logical consequence that baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation, and that all who have died unbaptized since these words were spoken have been lost. (4) If we accept the theory that baptism is the means of regeneration, that all baptized persons are necessarily regenerated we are irrestibly involved in the most dangerous and pernicious consequences. (5) If it means baptism it is difficult to understand why our Lord rebuked Nicodemus for his ignorance. (6) If water means baptism, it is most extraordinary that there is so little about baptism in the Epistles of the New Testament. Paul thanked God that of the Corinthians he had baptized none but Crispus and Gaius. He would surely never have said this, if all whom he baptized were at once born again. Imagine Paul saying, "I thank God I renegerated none of you."

Baptism as an ordinance cannot communicate life, nor is it essential to salvation. Water here is figurative of the Word of God as it is also in the thirteenth chapter, in connection with the feet washing of the disciples, and in Ephesians v:26: "The washing of water by *the Word*." Then there are three passages which show conclusively that the Word of God is meant: 1 Corinthians iv:15, "for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you *through the Gospel*," James i:18, "Of His own will begat He us with the *Word of Truth*," and 1 Peter i:23. In the last named passage Peter writes: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the Word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever." This Petrine statement is sufficient to silence the view that water baptism is an agent in the new birth. And this is so much more remarkable because Peter is the Apostle through whom ritualistic Christendom claims to have received its authority and doctrine. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring about the new birth. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing cometh by the Word of God. The Word believed and accepted, the Holy Spirit accomplishes by His power the new birth, and the new nature, the eternal life is received. We may well call the Word of God the mother of all those who are begotten again, while the Holy Spirit is the Father. For this reason Peter exhorts new-born babes, those just born again, to desire the sincere milk of the Word to grow thereby (1 Peter ii:2). This is the only meaning of the word water, the written, the living and abiding Word of God.

This new birth by believing the Word of God, and through the Holy Spirit as the agent of life and power, is absolutely necessary for entrance into the Kingdom of God. It is this which delivers from the power of darkness and translates us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. And, as stated before, Israel cannot enter that coming Kingdom, the Kingdom which will come with the coming of the King, except by the new birth. The remnant of Israel will be born again in that coming day, and a great national regeneration is in store for that nation (Ezekiel xxxvi).

The Lord then said again, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." He bids him to stop wondering, and the repeated emphasis confirms the great importance of the new birth. No matter how this age may progress in educational and scientific matters (it can not progress in righteousness for it is an evil age) the demand of the Son of God can never be changed—"Ye must be born again." Dean Alford adduces from this statement an argument of the supernatural birth of our Lord. "The Lord could not say of Himself what he said to Nicodemus. He said 'Ye' and not 'We' must be born again. Why? Because in the full sense in which the flesh is incapacitated from entering the kingdom of God, He was not born of the flesh. . . . Therefore He includes not Himself in this necessity for the new birth."

Furthermore, our Lord said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (verse 8). This applies to the mysterious and incomprehensible operations of the Spirit of God in the new birth.

Verses 9-13. For the third time Nicodemus speaks; it is the last time he answered the Lord. He had first addressed the Lord expressing his faith in Him as a teacher come from God. When our Lord had told him of the new birth as the only way into the kingdom, Nicodemus answered foolishly, and now after he had heard from the lips of the Son of God all the great truths concerning man's corrupt nature, the necessity of the new birth by water and the spirit, and about the agent in the new birth, the Holy Spirit, in His incomprehensible operations, he asks, How can these things be? What an evidence of the blinded condition as to spiritual things this great teacher in Israel revealed! It is the blindness of the natural man which is the condition of all of us. After our eyes are opened we realize it as the blind man did whom the Lord healed—"one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (Chapter ix:25).

Nicodemus revealed ignorance even in the elementary things he should have known as the teacher of Israel. "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?" As such he should have known through the study of the Scriptures, at least in a general way, that Israel before entering and possessing the kingdom promised to them, must be an Israel not only circumcized in the flesh, but in the heart as well. The Lord had spoken to Nicodemus of these earthly things and not of heavenly things at all, not of this present dispensation and a Church with a heavenly calling, but of that kingdom of blessing and glory, an earthly kingdom, promised to Israel.

The Scriptures make it very plain that only the born-again remnant of Israel will enter the land and enjoy the millennial glories. "I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me. I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. xx:38). "And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God" (Zech. xiii:8-9). The ungodly, the apostate in Israel cannot enter the kingdom. In the Psalms and in the Prophets the necessity of a spiritual re-birth of Israel is often brought forth in connection with the coming kingdom. For instance in Psalm xv which begins with the questions—"Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" The answer is the demand of righteousness, the result of the new birth. Or in Psalm lxxiii, God will be good to Israel, fulfill all his promises to them, "to such as are of a clean heart." The new covenant which is yet to be made with all Israel mentions the new-birth. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . . I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jerem. xxxi:33). But the clearest prophecy on this line is the one to which we referred before—(Ezekiel xxxvi:23-36). Long before that the Lord had announced through Moses the world-wide dispersion of the nation, their return in repentance and their new birth. 'And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deut. xxx:6).

Of these earthly things, the earthly kingdom and the conditions to enter therein, the Lord had spoken, and Nicodemus did not know these simple things revealed in the Hebrew Scripture. Of "the heavenly things" the Lord did not speak to Nicodemus, and these heavenly things concern the fullness of redemption, the believer's identification with Himself, the gift of the Spirit, the Church as the body and fullness of Christ. From this we learn conclusively two important facts. First, the Kingdom of God has an earthly and heavenly side; the earthly side is the kingdom promised to Israel (called in Matthew "the Kingdom of heaven"); the heavenly side is the Church with her heavenly calling and destiny. The second fact is that the Lord speaks of the earthly things of the kingdom, the heavenly things were made known after the Holy Spirit came to earth.

In the next place He who spoke thus to Nicodemus reveals Himself, who He is, not "a great teacher," but One who came down from heaven, and though in the form of man, is in heaven. The words He spoke to Nicodemus demand our careful attention.

"No man hath ascended up to heaven." Some have looked upon this statement as a contradiction and point to Enoch and Elijah, who went to heaven without dying. It just depends what one understands by "heaven." The heaven of which our Lord speaks is the third heaven, where the dwelling place of God is. Into this heaven no man ever has ascended (Acts ii:34). Nor have the Saints of God since the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven to take His place at the right hand of God, gone into that heaven. The day will come when the redeemed will be brought into that heaven. The Lord speaks of Himself. "He that descended is the same also who ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Ephes. iv:10). We may well connect this statement of our Lord with Proverbs xxx:4—"Who hath ascended up into heaven or descended? Who hath gathered the wind into his fists? Who hath bound the waters into a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His Name, and what His Son's Name, if thou canst tell?" But why does He speak here first of ascending into heaven, and afterward mentions His descent? He speaks prophetically, that is in anticipation, as elsewhere in this Gospel, especially in His prayer in the seventeenth chapter. There He said, "I am no longer in the world," yet He was still in the world. So here He anticipates His ascension. And He descended, came down from heaven first. It is another precious evidence of His pre-existence and Deity. Equally so are the words, "the Son of Man who is in heaven."

This is a sublime statement with which Unitarians and others have meddled. That so-called Twentieth Century New Testament, which claims to be a translation from the Greek, when in reality it is nothing but a perverted paraphrase, against which we have repeatedly warned the people of God, translates and gives verse 13 as follows: "There is none gone up to heaven, except the one who came down from heaven—the Son of Man Himself." These men who are responsible for this Twentieth Century New Testament have taken an astonishing liberty with one of the greatest statements which came from the lips of our Lord—they have taken out the declaration of the Son of God that as Son of Man He is in Heaven, though He walked upon the earth. It shows what kind of a spirit is behind these attempts to modernize the Word of God.

Others have tried to correct this statement by saying "the Son of Man who was in heaven." While this is perfectly true, it does not say so in the text. "The Son of Man who is in heaven" reveals His omnipresence, the omnipresence of God. While living on earth as Man, He was at the same time in heaven; as God He dwelt in heaven; as Man He dwelt on earth. Every moment between His coming down from heaven, and His going back, this statement was true of Himself. It shows us that He did not relinquish His Deity when He appeared in the form of a servant. This Gospel shows us His three great attributes of Deity, omnipotence, omniscience, and here omnipresence.

"The expression 'who is in heaven' is one of those many expressions in the New Testament which can be explained in no other way than by Christ's Deity. It would be utterly absurd and untrue to say of any mere man, that at the very time he was speaking on earth he was in heaven. But it can be said of Christ with perfect truth and propriety. He never ceased to be very God, when He became incarnate. He was 'with God and was God.' As God He was in heaven while He spoke with Nicodemus. The expression is one which no Unitarian can explain away. If Christ was only a holy man and nothing more, He could not have used these words. The explanation of the former part of this verse, viz.: that Christ was caught up into heaven after His baptism, and there instructed about the Gospel He was to teach, would be of itself absurd, and a mere theory invented to get over a difficulty. But the conclusion of the verse is a blow at the very root of the Socinian system. It is written not only that Christ 'came down from heaven,' but that 'He is in heaven.' "*

Verses 14-17. In the previous verse the Lord had spoken of Himself as the Son of Man who is in heaven, and now He speaks of Himself as the Son of Man to be lifted up. Nicodemus must have remembered as the teacher in Israel that the Prophet Daniel spoke of the Messiah as the Son of Man. He saw Him in the night vision coming in the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom (Dan. vii:14). Nicodemus, in common with the nation, expected the coming of the Messiah to set up His kingdom, and overlooked the fact that the same prophet who beheld Him coming to receive the kingdom, also records the rejection of the Messiah.

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*Bishop Ryle.

"Messiah shall be cut off and have nothing" (Dan. ix:26). Our Lord therefore points out to him that before the glory can come there must be suffering first. The Son of Man, who will receive the throne of His Father David, and the promised kingdom, must first be lifted up.

This is the second "must" in the third chapter of this Gospel. If man must be born again in order to see and enter the kingdom of God, the Son of Man must be lifted up so that man dead in trespasses and sin, destitute of eternal life, may receive such life and not perish. The words of our Lord give the answer to the question Nicodemus had asked, "How can these things be?"—The Son of Man must be lifted up.

What our Lord means by the sentence "the Son of Man must be lifted up" is His death by crucifixion. The twelfth chapter makes this plain. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all to Me. This He said signifying what death He should die" (Verses 32-33). The incident in the wilderness, Moses lifting up the serpent, demonstrates the same fact. This is recorded in Numbers (xxi:4-9). God had sent into the camp of Israel fiery serpents as a judgment. The bite of these serpents was deadly. But when they cried "We have sinned" God provided a remedy. He told Moses to make a serpent of brass and set it upon a pole, with the assuring promise that everyone who is bitten and looks upon the brazen serpent should live. And Moses made the serpent and put it upon the pole, and whenever an Israelite was bitten, and he looked, he lived. This serpent of brass was carefully preserved by the people Israel and finally became an object of idolatry (like the cross in the Romish "church") till King Hezekiah destroyed it (2 Kings xviii:4). In spite of this fact a Romish church in Milan, Italy,claims to have the original brazen serpent Moses made.

The use of this incident to illustrate the wonderful truth of redemption, manifests the heavenly wisdom of our Lord. It also confirms the typical teaching of Old Testament events, that"all these things happened unto them for types, and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. x:11).

The condition in the Camp of Israel is a picture of the ravages of sin, and the wages of sin, which is death. The fatal poison of sin is working in the race and man is spiritually dead. The brazen serpent lifted up on a pole is the type of Christ in His sacrificial work on the cross. That serpent was the very image of what was destroying the Israelites, but the brazen serpent had no poisonous fangs; there was no poison in it. Though it bore the likeness of the serpent, the emblem of sin, it was harmless. Thus the Son of God appeared in the form of man, in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. viii:3), but He was without sin; He knew no sin. And when He was lifted up on the cross, on that cross He who knew no sin was made sin for us, and by the offering of Himself for sin, He put away sin. Hanging on that cross He bore the curse and redeemed those who believe on Him from the curse, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree (Gal. iii:13). Looking up to the brazen serpent, the Israelite saw the very thing which had put death and ruin upon them, triumphed over, completely conquered. And so as we look to Christ crucified, made a curse, bearing sin, we see sin judged, condemned, triumphed over, robbed of its power and stripped of its strength.

And as the Israelites looked to the lifted up brazen serpent, and beheld there a representation of God's power over that which wrought death, and beheld thus God's ability to save, to end death and to give life, the power of God was blessedly manifested in their salvation—"when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."—Even so, when we turn our eyes to the cross of Calvary, we behold the power of God in salvation. The old man has been crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we may not serve sin. We see ourselves redeemed from the guilt and power of sin; death is ended and life is given, even eternal life. Let us also notice that the death-stricken Israelite was not saved by a natural process of improvement or by a gradual restoration, but by a sudden supernatural manifestation of divine power. That life by which they lived was miraculous in its character. How blessedly and fully all this foreshadows and illustrates the Gospel of our salvation! The question Nicodemus asked as to the "how" of the new birth is wonderfully answered. Christ died for the ungodly and believing on Him means salvation from eternal perdition and the gift of eternal life. What is it to believe? It is the same that the Israelites did when in simple faith they accepted God's Word, believed it true and then looked to the brazen serpent on the pole. This is the way to salvation, as announced long before our Lord spoke these words of life to the teacher in Israel—"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah xlv:22).

There is life in a look at the crucified One;
  There is life at this moment for thee;
Then look, sinner—look unto Him and be saved—
  Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.

His anguish of soul on the cross hast thou seen?
  His cry of distress hast thou heard?
Then why, if the terrors of wrath He endured,
  Should pardon to thee be deferred?

We are healed by His stripes. Wouldst thou add to the word?
  And He is our righteousness made;
The best robe of heaven He bids thee put on;
  O couldst thou be better arrayed?

Then doubt not thy welcome, since God hath declared
  There remaineth no more to be done;
Christ once in the end of the world hath appeared,
    And completed the work He begun.

How needful it is in these days of apostasy to declare and to defend this one great truth concerning our salvation. In the very midst of the evangelical denominations, which generations ago preached this salvation by grace, men have arisen who boldly say that man is not saved by one act of faith, who deny the great and eternal truths of real salvation as they came from the lips of our Lord. But it is worse than that. The modern theology sees nothing in the death of Christ but an act of self-sacrifice, the martyr's death, and it denies Christ's substitutionary sacrifice. There is a veritable sneer in apostate Christendom at the words "vicarious sacrifice." And that masterpiece of Satan "Christian Science" does the same. It denies the reality of sin and death, and hence has only words of contempt for redemption by blood. Whoever it is who denies the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ as the only means of salvation, whether he is a professor or pulpiteer in some Protestant denomination, a Christian Scientist, a Spiritualist, or whatever other name he may bear, is a deluded, lost soul, the instrument of the powers of darkness, a blind leader of the blind, a hypocrite, of whom the Son of God has spoken His just words of condemnation: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matthew xxiii:33). If an apostate should read these lines, be warned, there is no escape for any man or woman who denies the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But who is able to give an exposition of John iii:16? "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." We do not say too much when we say, this is the most wonderful verse in the Bible. Luther said, "I love this text beyond measure." And so do we. Every Christian, who knows the Gospel, presses this precious utterance to his heart, and prizes it more than the riches of the whole world. Dr. Martin Luther's comment on this verse written four hundred years ago is still one of the best. We can do nothing better than to pass it on in translation to our readers, most of whom have no access to Luther's works.

"**The Person of the Giver.** In the *first* place, the Giver is not a man, an emperor, or an angel, but the high, eternal Majesty, God Himself, in comparison with whom all men are dust and ashes. He is no task-master, who only demands from us, nor is He now a devouring and consuming fire, but a rich, flowing, eternal fountain of grace and gifts.

"**Secondly, the cause.** What was the *cause* and *motive* of the giving? Nothing but pure, unspeakable love; for He does not give from obligation or duty, but from His own goodness, as such a Lord who likes to give, and takes His pleasure and joy in giving; He gives purely and freely, without the asking.

"**Thirdly, the gift itself.** What, then, does He give? Not heaven and earth and all they contain, but His *Son*, who is as great as God Himself. This is an eternal, an incomprehensible gift, which is a well and fountain of all grace, goodness and kindness; yet, the possession and ownership of eternal goods and treasures. When God gives His Son, what does He retain and what does He not give? Yea, He gives Himself entirely. (Rom. viii:32.)

"**Fourthly, how and in what manner is the Son given?** Look upon Him and see what He does and suffers, in that He must take upon Himself the fury and rage of the devil and sin and contend with them; this means to "give" in the highest sense.

"**Fifthly, the recipient to whom all this is given is also painted in the text.** In one word it is called "*World*." This is wonderful, extraordinary loving and giving. For what is the world, but a great mass of people who do not fear, trust or love God; in addition, also, the disobedient, murderers, whoremongers, thieves and knaves, transgressors of all the commandments, and opposers of them in all respects, clinging to the very devil, the arch enemy of God.

"**Sixthly.** Now follow the *fruit* and the *benefit* of this gift, "*Should not perish but have everlasting life.*" That is, I shall not remain in sin, I shall not have a bad conscience, nor be under the law. This grace shall effect this, that it shall extinguish hell for me, cast the devil under my feet, and in place of a frightened, despondent and deadened heart, I shall receive a joyful, living heart; in short, an *eternal*, imperishable life, instead of eternal destruction and death.

"**Seventhly**, the *manner* in which such treasure and gift is to be received, and the purse or casket into which it is to be laid is *faith alone.* Faith holds out her hands, opens the bag and receives abundant grace. Faith may be only a small, diminutive casket, but it contains such a noble, precious jewel, a pearl or an emerald such as the world does not contain."

But all these explanations are but the stammering lips of a child. Could Luther speak from the glory, he would own the insufficiency of these words. We believe that the world God loved, means the world just as Luther explained it. The view of Electionists, that the world means only the elect, whom God loved and predestinated before the foundation of the world, while the rest is predestinated to damnation, is unsound. The term "world" means the whole race of mankind. "To confine God's love to the elect, is taking a harsh and narrow view of God's character and fairly lays open Christianity to the modern charges brought against it as cruel and unjust to the ungodly. If God takes no thought for any but His elect, and cares for none besides, how shall He judge the world? I believe in the electing love of God the Father as strongly as any one. I regard the special love with which God loves the sheep whom He has given to Christ from all eternity, as a most blessed and comfortable truth, and one most cheering and profitable to believers. I only say, that it is not the truth of John iii:16."—Bishop Ryle.

Even John Calvin endorses the true meaning of the word "world." He says on this text, "Christ brought life, because the heavenly Father loves the human race, and wishes that they should not perish. Christ employed the universal term 'whosoever,' both to invite indiscriminately all to partake of life, and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. Such also is the import of the term 'world.' "

And who is able to give even a full comment on the smallest word in this text, which is the word "so"? No tongue nor pen can tell out the full meaning of these two letters. And then the words "He gave." How unsearchable and inexhaustible they are!

"The expression 'he gave' is a remarkable one. Christ is God the Father's gift to a lost and sinful world. He was given generally to be the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Friend of sinners—to make an atonement sufficient for all—and to provide a redemption large enough for all. To effect this, the Father freely gave Him up to be despised, rejected, mocked, crucified, and counted guilty and accursed for our sakes. It is written that He was 'delivered for our offences,' and that 'God spared Him not, but delivered him up for us all' (Rom. iv:25; viii: 32). Christ is the 'gift of God,' spoken of to the Samaritan woman (John iv:10), and the 'unspeakable gift' spoken of by St. Paul (2 Cor. ix:15). He Himself says to the wicked

Jews, 'My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven' (John vi:32). This last text, be it noted, was one with which Erskine silenced the General Assembly in Scotland, when he was accused of offering Christ too freely to sinners.

"It should be observed that our Lord calls Himself 'the only begotten Son of God' in this verse. In the verse but one before this, He called Himself 'the Son of man.' Both the names were used in order to impress upon the mind of Nicodemus the two natures of Messiah. He was not only the Son of man but the Son of God. But it is striking to remark that precisely the same words are used in both places about faith in Christ. If we would be saved, we must believe in Him both as the Son of Man and the Son of God."*

The greatest statement in this verse, which we cannot exhaust, is in the words, that he whosoever (it means you) believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. No human knows what it means to "perish," that awful destiny which is ours by nature, an endless, conscious existence in the outer darkness, with the load of sin unlifted, perishing and no end to this perishing. Nor do we know the fullest meaning of what the Glory is for which God has saved us and to which He brings His own. Only when we shall know, as we are known, when no longer we look into a glass darkly shall we measure the heights and depths of John iii:16.

Furthermore, the Lord told Nicodemus, that God did not send Him into the world that the world should be judged (the meaning of the word "condemned") by Him, "but that the world through Him might be saved." Later our Lord spoke words to the same effect. "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John xii:47). The Old Testament prophetic Word shows Messiah as the Judge of the nations and of the ungodly, both among Israel and the Gentiles. His Coming means judgment and for the earth the rule of righteousness, when righteousness will reign through Him as King of kings. Nicodemus and the Jews who expect the promised Messiah and His kingdom, therefore expected Him to come as Judge. They overlooked the fact that His second Coming will bring the judgments announced in the Prophets and the establishment of the throne of righteousness. His first coming is not for the fulfillment of promises to establish His Kingdom. While the Jews were blind as to the purpose of His first Coming, the professing church of today is even more blind as to His Second Coming. The purpose of His first Coming is that all the world might have a door of salvation opened through Himself; that Salvation might be provided for all the world, and that those who believe on Him might be saved. But it does not mean, that all the world will be saved in this age. When those who believe are gathered out, when the Church, the Body of Christ, is complete, His Second Coming takes place, and then He will judge the world in righteousness.

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*Notes on John

"The readiness of natural men everywhere to regard Christ as a Judge much more than as a Saviour, is a curious fact. The whole system of the Roman Catholic Church is full of the idea. People are taught to be afraid of Christ, and to flee to the Virgin Mary! Ignorant Protestants are not much better. They often regard Christ as a kind of Judge, whose demands they will have to satisfy at the last day, much more than as a present personal Saviour and Friend. Our Lord seems to foresee this error, and to correct it in the words of this text."

Verses 18-21. While it is true that the Son of God was not sent to condemn the world, yet in another sense the world is condemned already, for the world which lieth in the wicked one, yea the whole world is guilty before God and under condemnation. (Romans iii:19.) But the sinner who believes on the Son of God is no longer under that condemnation. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into comdemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (Chapter v:24.) But what a solemn truth it is that "he that believeth not is condemned already," he remains in his guilty condition before God, with wrath abiding upon him (verse 36); he is judged because he does not believe on the Son of God. Unbelief then is the sin which damns. Well has it been said, "Nothing is so provoking and offensive to God as to refuse the glorious salvation

He has provided at so mighty a cost, by the death of His only begotten Son. Nothing is so suicidal on the part of man as to turn away from the only remedy which can heal his soul. Other sins may be scarlet, filthy, and abominable. But not to believe on Christ is to bar the door in our own way, and to cut off ourselves from heaven. It has been truly remarked that it was a greater sin in Judas Iscariot not to believe on Christ for pardon, after he had betrayed Him, than to betray Him into the hands of His enemies. To betray Him no doubt was an act of enormous covetousness, wickedness and ingratitude. But not to seek Him afterwards by faith, was to disbelieve His love, mercy and power to save. Luther said on this passage, "Henceforward, he who is condemned must not complain of Adam, and his inborn sin. The seed of the woman, promised by God to bruise the head of the serpent, is now come and has atoned for sin, and taken away condemnation. But he must cry out against himself for not having accepted and believed in Christ. If I do not believe on Him, sin and condemnation must continue." With this tremendous, never changing utterance of our Lord before us, let us think of the masses about us. Every man and woman, though they make some kind of a religious profession, who does not believe on the Son of God, is condemned and lost. A Unitarian, a Christian Scientist, a Universalist and the vast majority of Ritualists and professing Protestant Church members, who have only the outward form of godliness and are destitute of real salvation, are all under the sentence of condemnation; they are lost. How well for us to remember that we owe to them the Gospel, and that we must witness to them concerning this solemn truth.

And this is the condemnation that He, the Light, came into the world, and through His coming it has been manifested what the heart of man is. Because man has an evil heart and evil deeds, he loves darkness rather than light. It was so with the Jews; it is so still. The light of the Gospel is here; it has been shining for nineteen hundred years, yet man continues to love darkness and refuses the light. And has the rejection of the Gospel-light ever been greater than it is now! Rejecting the Light, the Gospel, the Cross, is the greatest tragedy of human existence for it seals an eternal doom.

"The words, 'because their deeds were evil,' are very instructive. They teach us that where men have no love to Christ and His Gospel, and will not receive them, their lives and their works will prove at last to have been evil. Their habits of life may not be gross and immoral. They may be even comparatively decent and pure. But the last day will prove them to have been in reality 'evil.'

"Pride of intellect, or selfishness, or love of man's applause, or dislike to submission of will, or Self-righteousness, or some other false principle will be found to have run through all their conduct. In one way or another, when men refuse to come to Christ, their deeds will always prove to be 'evil.' Rejection of the Gospel will always be found to be connected with some moral obliquity. When Christ is refused we may be quite sure that there is something or other in life, or heart, which is not right. If a man does not love light his 'deeds are evil.' Human eyes may not detect the flaw; but the eyes of an all-seeing God do.

"The whole verse is a deeply humbling one. It shows the folly of all excuses for not receiving the Gospel, drawn from intellectual difficulties, from God's predestination, from our own inability to change ourselves, or to see things with the eyes of others. All such excuses are scattered to the winds by this solemn verse. People do not come to Christ, and do continue unconverted, just because they do not wish and want to come to Christ. They love something else better than the light. The elect of God prove themselves to be elect by 'choosing' the things which are according to God's mind. The wicked prove themselves to be only fit for destruction, by 'choosing, loving, and following' the things which must lead to destruction."*

But he that doeth truth, who in sincerity believes, cometh to the light, and walks in that light, and thus it will be manifested that his deeds are wrought in God, the fruits of that new nature he received in believing on the Son of God.

Verses 22-36. "After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judea; and there He tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison" (verses 22-24). The conversation with Nicodemus ended with the previous verse. We shall find Nicodemus mentioned twice more in this Gospel. After the conversation, perhaps the next morning, our Lord left Jerusalem and went into Judea, that is the surrounding country, where he tarried for some time with His disciples. There also the disciples baptized. The next chapter makes it clear that our Lord did not baptize Himself (iv:2) but His disciples baptized. We do not know anything else of this baptism, which must have been of the same character as John's baptism unto repentance. And John also continued in his ministry, baptizing in Aenon near Salim. He had not yet been cast into prison.

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*Bishop Ryle.

"Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all come to him" (Verses 25-26).

What the question was between the disciples and the Jews is not fully stated. It probably concerned the question of baptism, which of the baptisms, that by John, or the disciples' baptism, was the most valuable and purifying. It is evident that the unrecorded dispute brought the disciples of John to their master in a spirit of jealousy; they were sectarians and were disturbed by the action of the disciples of the Lord in baptizing the people. But this brought out a most wonderful testimony to Christ from the side of John.

John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly on account of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (Verses 27-30).

Blessed statement! It bears witness to the great spirituality and humility of John the Baptist. How else could it be? For of him it is written, "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke i:15).

And whenever the Spirit fills, He produces humility, lowliness of mind and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He rested in the will of God, perfectly content and assured that all is well. What then does it matter if more men came to Him, concerning whom he had borne witness, than to himself. He was fulfilling his mission as the herald of the King. Another one filled with the Holy Spirit manifested the same humility and contentment, Paul in the prison of Rome. He knew nothing of the spirit of jealousy, though some preached Christ out of contention, to add affliction to his bonds. But he rose above it all, when he wrote: "What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therefore do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. i:18).

John then speaks of Christ as the Bridegroom. He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom. But who is the Bride? Not Israel, who nationally held the position of the married wife (symbolically), being unfaithful, she was divorced, which is her present condition. A day is coming when Israel will be re-instituted and become once more married unto the Lord in earthly glory (see Isaiah lxii:4 and Hosea ii:16). But a divorced wife taken back into favor can hardly be called a Bride. The Bride of which John the Baptist speaks is the Church, gathering now to the heavenly Bridegroom, destined to be the Lamb's wife and to share with Him all His heavenly glory. John calls himself only the Bridegroom's friend. As such he greatly rejoiced to hear the Bridegroom's voice. Thus Christ was all his joy, to exalt Him the business of his ministry. Therefore he was content to decrease and see Christ increase. "He must increase, but I must decrease." This is the third "must" in this chapter. Even so it should be in the individual experience of every believer. Christ must ever increase and we decrease.

"He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Verses 31-36).

The Spirit-filled John exalts Christ and bears witness to His Deity. He is from above and therefore He is above all. Having come from above, He speaks of the heavenly things He has seen and which He knows. The words of Christ therefore are the unchangeable, the unchanging, the ever-abiding words of heavenly truth. He is the Truth and His Word is Truth. With Him whom he thus exalts he compares his own inferior ministry; he is of the earth and his conception earthly, weak and imperfect, as all earthly things are. The sentence, "no man receiveth His testimony" anticipates His rejection. But if any one believes the testimony of Him who is above and who has made known heavenly things, he hath set to it his seal that God is true. The seal is attached to a document to confirm and to attest it; even so he who receiveth the testimony of Christ, believes on Him, trusts in Him, declares thus his belief that God is true to His Word, and has kept His promises as to Christ and salvation. On the other hand "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John v:10).

The Son of God, sent by God, One with God, speaketh the words of God. How could it be otherwise? And there is another great statement: "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." In Him the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. Prophets in the Old Testament received the Spirit by measure, not so He who is very God. He in whom the Father dwelt was also the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. And those who are in Him receive the Holy Spirit not by measure, but He Himself comes as the abiding guest, so that believers are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Verse 35, "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand," means that the Father, in anticipation of the redemption work of His Son has given Him the pre-eminence in all things. All things belong to Him in His essential Deity; but as the incarnate Son of God who finished the work, He alone could finish, the work of the Cross, He has been made the heir of all things.

The final testimony of John is a very solemn utterance. It is a fit termination of this great chapter. Eternal life is the possession of all who believe on the Son. This great truth we shall find more fully developed in the next chapters. Here John the Baptist states the way to life, to receive eternal life as a present possession (hath), which is faith in the Son of God. And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. What an important statement this is! Many are today disbelieving the revelation of God's word concerning the wrath of God and the eternal punishment of all those who do not accept the Lord Jesus Christ and who do not believe on Him. Some deny altogether that the sinner is by nature a child of wrath. Others say that the wicked man dies like the beast; they persuade themselves that somehow in some way, the wicked are annihilated and have no immortality, and that only those who believe on Christ possess immortality. Others have invented a second chance theory; others believe, or say they believe, in universal salvation, while others call it restitution or restorationism. All these theorists deny that there is such a thing as the eternal, never ending wrath of God. All of them juggle with the Hebrew and Greek words translated "forever" and "everlasting" as if these are terms of limitation. The one sentence, the final testimony of this Spirit filled man of God answers all their delusions and hallucinations. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Here we learn that man is by nature a child of wrath (Eph. ii:3), for the wrath of God in order to abide upon the natural man, who does not believe in the Son, must be upon him already. In the second place annihilationists are proven to be liars, for if sinners are annihilated the wrath of God cannot abide upon them. Russellites, California Restorationists, Universalists and all others are completely answered by this solemn declaration "the wrath of God abideth on him." It is IMPOSSIBLE to say that this statement means anything less than timelessness and endlessness. It is clear cut a n permits no deceitful handling. And may we all realize never before what an awful thing it is to reject the Son of God and to neglect so great salvation. And knowing this may we go forth and give a dying world the Gospel of His grace.

CHAPTER IV.

Verses 1-6. The Lord left Jerusalem and Judea and turned towards Galilee. On the way there He must needs go through Samaria. In His omniscience He knew her whom He had come to seek and save. In the Gospel of Matthew we read that He said to His disciples, when He sent them forth as His messengers, that they should not go to Samaria nor to the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Chapter X.) The message which He gave then was the message for Israel—"The Kingdom of heaven is at hand," that is the promised, literal kingdom. He sent them forth to herald that kingdom; they were the messengers of the King, the Son of David. It was a national affair. It took place before John the Baptist had been put into prison. But now John's ministry is ended; he is in prison; he is not seen again in the Gospel, and is mentioned but twice more (Chapter v:33; x:40). The Lord with His disciples did not enter Samaria to announce the nearness of the kingdom, but He went there for the sake of the woman to whom He would reveal even greater things than He revealed to the teacher in Israel, Nicodemus.

The reason for the Lord's departure from Judea was His knowledge that the Pharisees were greatly stirred up by the fact that He was making more disciples, had a greater following, than John. They must have recalled the testimony John had given concerning Him, they also knew what had occurred in the temple. No doubt they were even then secretly plotting to end His ministry. The omniscient Lord knew it all. Therefore He left Judea, and spent two days in Samaria, before He reached Galilee, to manifest His gracious power again and to perform His second great sign.

We must not pass over these events without pointing out their typical significance. When our Lord left Judea and

Jerusalem it foreshadows the setting aside of Jerusalem, which rejected Him. His going into Samaria for two days to bring the message of salvation to the outcasts, to reveal Himself in the fullness of grace, is typical of what would happen after Jerusalem rejected Him, the Gospel of grace preached to the Gentiles. Then comes the third day, when He reached Galilee, is received, heals the nobleman's son, which foreshadows the restoration of Israel. (See and compare with Hosea vi:i-3.)

He must needs go through Samaria, for it was the only direct way to reach Galilee. The Galileans, when going to Jerusalem to attend the feasts of the Lord, always had to journey through Samaria, but some of the strictest Jews when obliged to go to the northern part of the land made a detour and passed through Perea, so as not to become defiled by contact with the Samaritans. The Jews hated and despised the Samaritans, because they were a mongrel race with a religion partly Jewish, and partly heathen. (2 Kings xvii:24-41).

But the Lord knew why He must needs go through Samaria. While in the preceding chapter Nicodemus sought Him, here He seeks the woman.

He came to the city of Samaria called Sychar, which means "purchased." It is unquestionably identical with Shechem, and is a very historical place. God first appeared unto the father of the nation at Shechem (Gen. xii:6). Jacob dwelt there (Genesis xxxiv:2). At that place Joseph's brethren fed their flocks (Genesis xxxvii:12). It was one of the cities of refuge (Josh. xx:7-8) and Joshua delivered at this place his great message (Josh. xxxiv:1). At Shechem the bones of Joseph were buried as well as those of his fathers (Josh. xxiv:32; Acts vii:16). Shechem is also prominently connected with the revolt of the ten tribes (1 Kings xii:1, 25).

There at Jacob's well, on the stone rim of the well, we see Him sitting, being wearied with His journey. The dusty looking traveler, tired out and thirsty, is the Lord of Glory, in creature form. "Thus," He sat on the well. Said Chrysostom, "What meaneth thus? Not upon a throne; not upon a cushion; but simply and as He was upon the ground." It is a beautiful illustration and evidence of His humiliation and the reality of His human body He had taken on in incarnation. Well may we think of Him when we are weary, knowing that He can and He does sympathize with us in our weariness (Hebrews iv:15). And it was about the sixth hour. This was at noon, in the hottest, most sultry part of the day. And there He waited patiently for her to come, who knew Him not, but who was known by Him. It has been mentioned by Burgon that "Jacob and Moses each found his wife beside a well of water; and here is seen that a greater One than they, their divine Antitype, the Bridegroom taking to Himself His alien spouse at a well likewise."

Verses 7-10. And now she appears with her waterpot and finds the stranger sitting there. It is customary to go to the well towards evening, but she came at noon, probably on account of her character, an outcast, ashamed to mingle with others.

She also was weary and alone; she knew not what was before her, and that in a little while she would leave her waterpot, forget her weariness, and fly back to the village to bring glad tidings to other weary souls, after her own refreshment. "Give me to drink," were the words the stranger addressed to the woman. How simple the request; yet it was heavenly wisdom which made it. Another has pointed out the significance of it in the following words:

"In this simple request of our Lord there are four things deserving notice. (a) It was a gracious act of spiritual agression on a sinner. He did not wait for the woman to speak to Him, but was the first to begin conversation. (b) It was an act of marvelous condescension. He by whom all things were made, the Creator of fountains, brooks, and rivers, is not ashamed to ask for a draught of water from the hand of one of his sinful creatures. (c) It was an act full of wisdom and prudence. He does not at once force religion on the attention of the woman, and rebuke her for her sins. He begins with a subject apparently indifferent, and yet one of which the woman's mind was doubtless full. He asks her for water. (d) It was an act full of the nicest tact, and exhibiting perfect knowledge of the human mind. He asks a favor, and puts Himself under an obligation. No line of proceeding, it is well known to wise people, would be more likely to conciliate the woman's feelings towards Him, and to make her willing to hear His teaching. Simple as the request was, it contains principles which deserve the closest attention of all who desire to do good to ignorant and thoughtless sinners."

"Give me to drink." But there was another thirst in His loving heart for the poor lost soul. He thirsted for her salvation. "But what a sight to God, and indeed, to faith, the Son of God when driven out by the jealous hatred and contempt of man, of His own people who received Him not, occupying Himself with an unhappy Samaritan who had exhausted her life in quest of happiness never thus found!" And the woman was greatly surprised that He, a Jew, should ask her, a Samaritan woman to give Him to drink. There was great enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans. A Samaritan, on account of past history, was looked upon as an outcast, who had forfeited all rights of membership in the commonwealth of Israel. They despised them. One of the vilest utterances made against our blessed Lord is the one recorded in Chapter viii:48, when His enemies said to Him, "Say we not well, Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon."

How blessed is His answer. He does not enter with her in a discussion of the differences between the Jews and the Samaritans, nor does He explain why He had asked her to give Him to drink. He says something which at once aroused the curiosity of the woman and made her forget her surprise that a Jew should make such a request of her. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water." He speaks of Himself, for He is God's unspeakable gift. Yet in the first instance when He said, "If thou knewest the gift of God" He meant God's condescending grace coming down to seek the lost sinner, ready to give all man needs. This marvelous grace, God willing to give, is expressed and demonstrated in His own person, the Son of God. If she had known, that it is Jehovah manifested in the flesh, the promised Messiah, she would turn to Him with a request to give her, and He would give her living water. But she was ignorant of these facts in her darkened, sinful heart. She knew nothing of

God's abundant grace, nor of Him who had come to reveal that grace. Such is still the blindness of the natural man, even though he may have confessed to be religious, as the Samaritans were religious.

He told her that He could give "living water." What did our Lord mean by this term? In Jeremiah ii:13 we read that the Lord is called a fountain of living waters, and in Isaiah xliv:3 the water poured forth is identified with the Holy Spirit—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." But we do not need to go outside of the Gospel of John for an explanation of this term. It is once more used by our Lord in the seventh chapter of this Gospel, and there we find a divinely given comment. "If any man thirst," said our Lord at the Feast of Tabernacles, "let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this He spake of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (vii:38, 39). The "living water" is the gift of the Holy Spirit. We find this verified when we hear what else the Lord had to say to this woman about the living water.

Verses 11-14. She speaks as Nicodemus spoke, knowing nothing of the great spiritual Truth the Lord had uttered. She reasoned about His words, the only thing the natural man can do and the natural man generally does. The well is deep, how is He going to draw the living water? Is this stranger a greater man than Jacob, or has he a better well?

He makes it clear to her first of all that He is not speaking of the literal water, that she is mistaken in thinking He meant the water in the well before them. Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. Even so it is true not only of the physical water, but of all temporal, material things; they can never satisfy the human soul. He who drinks of these and finds his enjoyment in earthly things will thirst again. But He has another water to give, living water.

He can give living water for the soul's need, just as in creation He has supplied the physical water, free, without money and without price, to satisfy the creature's need. And that living water, when received from Him, satisfies. He who drinketh of it shall never thirst (or: in no way thirst for ever). And more than that; He promises that the water He gives shall be in him who receives it a well (or: spring) of water springing up unto eternal life. He speaks of the gift of the Spirit, whom all receive who believe on Him. To Nicodemus the Lord unfolded the necessity of the new birth, by the water and the Spirit, and now He speaks of what the believer, who knows the gift of God, receives. He gives the Holy Spirit to be in him as a spring of water springing up unto eternal life. The Holy Spirit is in the believer to satisfy his needs, for communion and for worship, and becomes thus a perpetual exhaustless source for joy and peace, so that if this spring flows unhindered, thirst after other things ceases. All this was spoken by our Lord in anticipation of His work on the Cross, His resurrection and glorification as the risen Christ. The words of our Lord tell us that He who knows the gift of God, His free gift, eternal life in Him whom He has sent, receives from Christ the living water, the Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer, abiding with him forever and supplying all his needs, so that all soul thirst is satisfied.*

Verses 15-18. The woman with her darkened mind still thinks of the literal water; she did not know, nor understand, what the Lord Jesus meant when He spoke of living water and of the indwelling fountain. Yet here is also the first evidence that her heart responded to His Words. He had said to her "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." And now she said to the unknown stranger, "Give me this water." Though she did not know what she asked, yet it was a prayer. It expressed a want, though she knew not what it was; she realized she was in the presence of One who could give and she asked Him to give to her. It is the first, faint desire of her heart for something. "It would be as foolish to scrutinize the grammatical construction of an infant's cry, as to analyze the precise motives of a soul's breathings after God." This fully applies to the case of the woman.

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*Shall thirst no more for ever. What an assurance this is! But how little oftentimes does it seem to justify itself in actual realization. Here comes in the sad reminder for us of how we with our unbelief limit the glorious largeness of the divine promises, and often seem bent upon making falsehood of eternal Truth. Christ speaks according to the fullness of the gift bestowed. As to our enjoyment of it, it is always conditional upon the way in which faith entertains it. We are not to expect that it will be realized without the activity of faith and the diligent use of what God has given us as means to its attainment.—Numerical Bible.

Then the Lord abruptly changed his mode of speech; He drops the figurative language He employed, and no more mentions after this the living water. Up to this point He had spoken to her of the gift of God, of His Grace, of His power to give living water. But her conscience was unreached; yet the conscience must be aroused, deeply exercised, before grace, and the gift of grace, can be understood and appreciated. The Lord therefore asked her to call her husband. He knew her whole sad history of sin; and laying bare the secrets of her life He aimed at her conscience to produce conviction of sin, and to show her His own omniscience. It has been well said "the first draught of living water which the Lord gave to the Samaritan woman was conviction of sin." Nor must we lose sight of the fact that while our Lord touched her sinful life by saying, "Go call thy husband" that He also added "and come hither." How His wonderful grace shines out in this request once more! If she is a sinner, living a vile, unclean life, He is the sinner's friend ready to welcome her. "And come hither" is His word of welcome to her; grace speaks once more.

Her answer is brief. "I have no husband." We take it that it was a confession of her evil life, and not an attempt to deceive the Lord, as some have thought. A few words come from His lips and she is fully uncovered as to her sinful, wicked life. Yet, what words these are which the omniscient Lord addresses to her! He shows the full knowledge of her sin in a few words, yet these words are not harsh words of condemnation. "Thou hast well said"—He commended her honest confession and then He laid bare her past life, a life of adultery, and tells her of her present sin, that she lived with a man who is not her husband. He closed His terse answer by telling her again "thou has truly said." He who is the light of the world has manifested her darkness, yet He did it in a loving, gracious manner, such as He, full of grace and truth, alone could do.

Verses 19-24. The woman is convicted of her sin. She acknowledges the truth of the words He has spoken, that they were words of divine power, and that He who had uttered them must be the mouthpiece of God. Her conscience is awakened because her sins were so fully exposed, and therefore she turns to Him for instruction and light, which was an evidence of her spiritual anxiety. Her first thought is to do something. Her mind thinks of worshipping God, which she probably in her sinful career had totally neglected.

She was fully aroused and deeply anxious to know the truth; but how is she to know what is true worship and the true way to God? As a Samaritan she remembered at once that their mode of worship differed from the Jewish worship. The Jews claimed that Jerusalem was the only place where men ought to worship. "Our fathers," she said, "worshipped in this mountain" pointing, no doubt, as she spoke, towards Mount Gerizim. According to Samaritan tradition Gerizim was the mountain where Abraham offered up Isaac. This tradition is not true; but Gerizim is the mountain where a rival temple had been built, which, according to Josephus, was destroyed by Hyrcanus in the year 129 B. C. To this day this mountain is called "the holy mountain."

The answer our Lord gave to this seeking soul is of great importance. He reveals great truths concerning true worship, that is Christian worship, which in these words of our Lord is mentioned for the first time in the Bible. "Woman, believe Me," he said to her. It is the only time our Lord used this phrase "believe Me." What He was about to reveal was something altogether new and it required faith to lay hold on it. The hour He speaks of is the present Christian age. During this dispensation worship of the Father will not be done upon a mountain nor in an earthly Temple, in Jerusalem. Not alone will the worship of the Samaritans cease, but the whole system of the God-appointed Jewish worship, altars, sacrifices, offerings, priests, etc., would pass away. Ritualistic Christendom with its show-worship, apes after the ancient Jewish worship, is, in view of these words of our Lord an invention. "To bring into the Church holy places, sanctuaries, altars, priests, sacrifices, gorgeous vestments and the like, is to dig up that which has been buried long ago, and to turn to candles for light under the noon-day sun. The favorite theory of the Irvingites that we ought as far as possible in our public worship, to copy the Jewish temple service and ceremonial, seems incapable of reconciliation with the words of our Lord." (Bishop Ryle.)

In all their worship, the Lord told her, the Samaritans did not know what they worshipped; it was different with the Jews, they knew what they worshipped "for salvation is of the Jews." The Samaritans had no authority for their worship, but the Jews had all authority. Salvation, or as it is in the Greek, "the salvation" is of the Jews. The Lord meant Himself. The Hebrew word for "salvation" is Jehoshua; the Greek "Jesus" is derived from the Hebrew word. Everything in the worship of the Jews in Jerusalem foreshadowed the Messiah and His salvation, and foremost of course, the great prophecies of the prophets revealed Him and His work. And when that work was finished on the Cross there would be as a result another worship; there would be true worshippers, who worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Then the Lord announced that "the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Nowhere in the Old Testament do we read that God was worshipped as "Father"; the worship of God, of Jehovah, is everywhere mentioned, but the relationship of a believing sinner to God as Father, and as a son of God is unknown in the Old Testament Scriptures. The Son of God alone has made known this marvelous truth and it is made known through His finished work on the cross.

In Judaism God dwelt in thick darkness, and the testimony rendered by the whole Levitical system (with its sacrifices, priests, veil, incense, etc.) was, that the way into the Holiest had not yet been made manifest. When Christ died the veil was rent from top to bottom, and eternal redemption was found; the worshippers once purged from their sins have no more conscience of sins and can draw near. Such is Christianity, God having revealed Himself as the Father in the Son through the Spirit. To know Him, the only true God, and Him Whom He sent, His only Begotten, is life eternal. And the mighty work which was done on the cross hath dealt with all our evil, so that we are free to enjoy Himself. We know, therefore, Whom we Worship and not merely "what."

And this worship in spirit and truth, this heart worship of the Father, is only possible with true believers, who are in Christ and possess the Holy Spirit, who alone makes such worship possible, "For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in the flesh" (Philippians iii:3). This true worship necessitates living in the truth and walking in the Spirit.

"And such the Father seeketh to worship Him." We do not find such a statement anywhere else in the Scriptures. Nowhere is it said that the Father seeketh; but here the Son of God makes known that the Father seeketh true worshippers, worshippers in spirit and in truth. And this seeking of the Father of true worshippers goes on throughout this present age through the Spirit of God. All who accept the Lord Jesus Christ, and are saved are thus sought by the Father as worshippers. It is true we are saved to serve; but a still higher truth is we are saved to worship. In fact only if we worship right, can we serve right. This true worship centers in the Lord Jesus Christ; true worshippers are not gathered to earthly names, institutions, denominations, sects or parties, but unto the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The day will come when "the hour" in which the Father seeketh such to worship Him will end; this dispensation in which the true Church is gathered will end, like previous dispensations ended. The true Church will be brought to glory, and is seen there, in the Book of Revelation, as a company of worshippers. (Revelation iv-v.) And after that another form of worship will be introduced on the earth for Israel and the Nations. This will center once more in Jerusalem, in a house to which all nations gather in the Kingdom. (See Ezekiel xl, etc.)

"God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The declaration our Lord made to the woman as to the nature of God is one of the profoundest ever made. It is impossible for the finite mind to define, to explain or understand fully this great utterance "God is a Spirit." True worship must, therefore, be in correspondence with the nature of God; He can only accept spiritual worship.

"The importance of this great principle, laid down in this and the preceding verse, can never be perverted. Any religious teaching which tends to depreciate heart-worship, and to turn Christianity into a mere formal service, or which tends to bring back Jewish shadows, ceremonies and services, and to introduce them into Christian worship, is in the face of these remarkable verses most unscriptural and deserving of reprobation."* And this false worship we find today almost universally in connection with the counterfeit Gospel, against which the Holy Spirit so solemnly warns in the Epistle to the Galatians.

Verses 25-27. And now this Samaritan woman thinks of Messiah, the promised Saviour-King. Her heart is ready, yea, made ready by the Lord, to receive the truth as to the Person before her. She had heard of "living water"; her life of sin and shame had been uncovered, which she fully owned and did not deny; she had with an awakened conscience inquired about worship and was told of true heart worship, which she was unable to render. And now convicted and perplexed, she wishes for Him, the Messiah (of whom the Samaritans had knowledge and in whose coming they believed), who would reveal all things. She expressed thus her desire to know the promised One who, according to the faint conception she had, would supply her need and solve her difficulties. No sooner had she uttered this wish, than the Lord in His gracious condescension makes Himself known to her.

It has been pointed out how the story of the Samaritan woman reveals the mercy, the wisdom, the patience and the power of our Lord. His condescending mercy that He should take up such a one and seek her; His wisdom in dealing with this sinful soul; His patience in bearing with her ignorance and His power in drawing her to Himself. The returning disciples wondered that He talked with a woman. They marveled that He instructed a Samaritan woman. Yet they did not dare to ask Him a question about it, knowing as they did, the dignity and glory of their Lord and Master, that all He did was right and perfect.

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*Notes on John.

Verses 28-30. After the Lord had told the woman that He was the Messiah she forgot all about her errand, why she had come to the well; she left the waterpot empty and unfilled at the well. It was probably a large jar and of value to her; but her soul was so stirred that she paid no attention to the jar and rushed back in haste to the city as a messenger to others. She gives a glowing testimony of Him who had found her, both of His grace and of her own sinfulness. "Come and see a man, who told me all things that I ever did. Is not this the Christ?" She becomes a witness for the Lord, and is anxious to make Him known to others, who needed Him. While the Lord had told her first "go and call thy husband" she now goes to the city to call the men of the city to come out and see Christ. They must have known her character; how great must have been their surprise when this abandoned woman, all aglow with fervor and emotion, brought such a message! Her "Come and see," the blessed words of grace we found so prominent in the first chapter of this Gospel, used first by the Lord and by His disciples, found a great response, for the men went out and came to Him.*

Verses 31-38. These words were spoken by our Lord to His disciples during the interval of the woman's departure and the coming of the Samaritans. How little they knew with what their Lord and Master was occupied! They thought of only the body and its temporal wants, and were ignorant of what filled His holy soul. They were ignorant of the meat, the other food, He was eating. Their ignorance is at once revealed when they speak to each other, "Hath any man brought Him ought to eat?" But the meat He meant was not that which satisfies the body, but that which refreshed His soul, namely, doing the will of His Father who sent Him, and to finish His work. That was His delight. And when He spoke of finishing His work, He must have looked on towards the goal, why He had come to earth—to die the death of the Cross. The will of His Father had been done in leading the Samaritan woman to Himself, so that ere long she would be a worshipper in spirit and in truth. And how His loving soul must have longed for the Samaritans to come!

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*What foolish inventions the Roman Catholic Church has made may be learned from the commentary of Cornelius a Lapide. He says the woman's name was Photine; she later suffered martyrdom, and that her head is kept as a relic in the Basilica of St. Paul in Rome, and that it was actually shown to him!

Then He quoted a familiar saying, well known at that time: "Four months, then cometh the harvest." But He speaks of another field and another harvest. Perhaps when He uttered these words, "lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest," He pointed towards the Samaritan city and the stream of the inhabitants passing through the fields to seek His presence. These men coming to Him showed that the fields were ripe for the harvest. We should also remember that our Lord used the field as a type of the world in which the good seed is to be sown. (Matthew xiii.) Reaping and sowing, sowing and reaping, will continue in this field till the harvest, the great harvest comes, when He comes again. And He that goeth into that field and reapeth, receiveth wages and gathers fruit and results, not for this present life, but for eternal life. Then, in glory comes the time when the sower and the reaper will rejoice together. These statements of our Lord, as well as those which follow, must be looked upon by way of contrast with the work done in the Old Testament by the Prophets. "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men labored and ye entered into their labors." The "other men" are the laborers of the Old Testament who prepared the ground and sowed the seed; the disciples with their testimony as to Christ and His finished work would reap the harvest. Nor must we forget Himself as the great sower and the great reaper, that the joy and the glory belongs to Him. Of Him it is true what is written in the Psalms—"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with Him." And when He comes, bringing His sheaves with Him, all His servants will receive the reward for the sowing and reaping.

Verses 39-42. How wonderful it is! The simple testimony of the woman, her "Come and see," her witness to Christ in the few words she spoke, brought such glorious results, so that many Samaritans believed on Him. She had become a soul winner. Every Christian should be a soul winner. The more simple, earnest, direct and unassuming a testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ is, the more it will be owned by the Spirit of God. Every true believer may be used as this Samaritan woman was in leading others to Him. And when the Samaritans came, saw Him and heard His words, they entreated Him to tarry with them and He abode two days. They were not like the Gergesenes who asked Him to depart. Then many more believed on Him because of His own words; they had a higher evidence than the testimony of the woman. Hearing Him they knew that He is indeed the Saviour of the world.

We must not leave this portion of the Gospel without showing its interesting dispensational meaning. When our Lord went to Samaria He had left behind Jerusalem, and that which is represented by it, Judaism. In Samaria, He is, so to speak, on Gentile ground. What we have learned, the truth our Lord unfolds to the Samaritan woman, is specifically Christian truth. The fullness of grace, as the result of the finished work of Christ on the Cross; the coming and the gift of the Holy Spirit, indwelling the believer; the true worship, the Father seeking such worshippers; the witness bearing of the woman; the many Samaritans who believed on Him as the Saviour; are all the characteristic blessings of this age, the blessings of the Gospel as preached among Gentiles. The two days our Lord tarried in Samaria have, therefore, also a typical meaning. They foreshadow the time when divine grace is being manifested to the Gentiles, while Jerusalem is set aside. The same period of time is indicated in the prophecy of Hosea. In chapter vi of that Prophet we find a prophetic description of the repentance of a part of the Jews in the future. They will say then: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for He hath torn, and He will heal us: He hath smitten and He will bind us up.

After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight" (Hosea vi:1-2). The third day is the day of their coming restoration when Israel receives the kingdom, which the Lord as the promised Messiah-King first preached unto them and which they rejected. That third day, the day of the coming Kingdom will last 1,000 years; it is the millennium. The preceding two days during which Israel is dead, spiritually and nationally, cannot mean two literal days; they are prophetic days as God measures days—"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."*

The two days here in this Gospel when our Lord tarried with the Samaritans have the same meaning typically, foreshadowing the period of time when His grace goes forth to the Gentiles, as it still does. The remainder of this chapter fully confirms this and we shall see how the recorded events show what is yet to take place in the future, when He returns and Israel is restored and blest. But before we do this we call attention to another fact. The Lord did not perform a single miracle among the Samaritans. Not a sick one was brought to be healed; the Samaritan woman and the other Samaritans believed without seeing a single sign, or manifestation of His divine power. It was different when the Lord sent His disciples to carry the Gospel of the Kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then He told them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." . . . "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons" (Matthew x:7-8). And why did the Lord give power to His disciples to perform miracles? Because they were the heralds of the kingdom the King was offering to Israel, and that offer demanded the outward signs and miracles promised in connection with the kingdom. But when in Samaria the Lord did not perform a single miracle, in harmony with the characteristic of this age, the age of faith and not the age of sight. This ought to help those who have been misled by false teaching, who think that miracles, healings, certain gifts, like the gift of tongues, ought to be revived in connection with the preaching of the Gospel of Grace and the Church.

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*We do not want our readers to understand that we teach that this present age, therefore, must last the full two thousand years. The exact duration of this age, or the duration of the times of the Gentiles cannot be definitely ascertained.

Verses 43-45. The two days over, the Lord came to Galilee, back to Cana, where He had turned the water into wine; He came back to His own country, that which was His land. So will He return some day to His own and as the Galileans received Him, even so He will find a welcome from the faithful remnant of His people. That Cana is mentioned again where He had made the water wine, the blessed type of the coming days of joy and glory, is to tell us that when the days of gracious Gentile visitation are over that which His first miracle foreshadows will be accomplished.

Verses 46-54. The nobleman was a courtier, probably attached to Herod's magnificent court. This nobleman is of course not the same person mentioned in Matthew viii:5, for there it is a servant who is healed, here it is a son. The miracle reported by John is nowhere else mentioned in the synoptic Gospels. This courtier had heard that Jesus had come, and then he appeared in His presence, beseeching Him to heal his son who was sick unto death. The words which our Lord first addressed to him, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," bring out the contrast between the simple faith of the Samaritans and the unbelief of the Galileans and the Jews, which demanded signs and wonders in order to believe. The request of the nobleman is answered by the Lord; the son was healed by the Word of the Lord. He demonstrated His power, the power of God. The very hour the Son of God had spoken "Thy son liveth" the deadly fever had left him. The healing Word, "Go thy way; thy son liveth," was spoken at one o'clock p. m. Capernaum, where the healing took effect, was about twenty miles away. The late Professor Curtis rode from Cana to Capernaum easily in a little more than four hours. The nobleman might have been back and by his son's side by five o'clock, yet we read that it was the next day before he went home. What kept that father, but a moment before Jesus spake the life-restoring Word so filled with fear and distress about his son, quietly at Cana all those hours? Nothing, clearly, but a new born faith in the power of His Word, and a new born love for Himself. Nothing less than this could have kept that father from the bedside of his son.

The experience of millions confirms the truth of the incident; for the Christian's assurance rests on the Word of God and on that alone. We are saved by believing in Christ according to the Word of God, and we have quietness and assurance by believing what the Word says about the finished work of Christ. This second sign the Lord did typifies the healing and restoration of Israel, the third day, when He will raise them up and they shall live in His sight and declare His glory.

CHAPTER V

With this chapter begins a new section of this book. It is introduced by the phrase "After this," or as it should be rendered, "After these things." The Apostle John uses this expression frequently. It has also been translated by "Afterward" and "Hereafter." Eight times this phrase is used in his Gospel (iii:22; v:1, 14; vi:1; vii:1; xiii:7; xix: 38 and xxi: 1); in the Book of Revelation it is used ten times.

Verses 1-4. We do not know what feast it was; certainly not Purim as some think, more probably Passover. But the feast is no longer "Jehovah's feast," but the "feast of the Jews"; simply an outward, religious observance, strictly kept as to the letter by a rebellious, unbelieving people, and therefore no longer owned by the Lord. And yet the Lord Jesus went up to Jerusalem. As "made under the Law" (Galatians iv:4), He graciously conformed to these institutions which He Himself had ordained. And if the feast was Passover, as we believe it was, it is of blessed significance that He went up to Jerusalem, beginning with the second Passover mentioned in this Gospel the more public teaching concerning eternal life, the life given through the sacrificial death of the true Passover Lamb.

At the sheep-gate (Nehemiah iii:1) there was a pool, called Bethesda (House of Mercy), surrounded by five porches in which a large number of sick people rested. They all waited for the moment when the waters of the pool became agitated. It was the evidence that an angel had stirred the waters, and whosoever of the sick stepped in first was made whole. The troubling of the waters occurred only at certain seasons; we are not told how often. The genuineness of this verse has been doubted by many, among them such leading scholars as Tischendorf, Alford, Meyer, Tholuck and Olshausen. Others concede that the passage is genuine and should be maintained, but suggest that there was no real angel who troubled the water, that it was only the superstitious belief of the sick who had gathered there. So Dr. Bullinger in the "Companion Bible" introduces a parenthesis by which he attempts to clear up the difficulty—"For (it was said) that an angel went down. . . ." But there is no need to omit this passage nor to add words to explain it. Why should this incident be thought impossible? The ministry of angels was not an uncommon occurrence in the history of the Jews. We find the record of their ministries elsewhere in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts. Why then should this passage be rejected as unreliable? The objection originates mostly in the minds of men who would like to eliminate, if possible, everything miraculous and supernatural manifestations from the Word of God. If ministries of angels are believed, and that these beings carry out God's wishes and designs, then there is nothing strange at all in this record. We believe it as it reads. It is serious to meddle with any portion or statement of the Word of God. God sent this angel at certain times to produce the healing power of the water, to remind His people of His power as it had been in their behalf in the past, and that He was still the same Jehovah, who doeth wondrous things. But there is a deeper lesson than the historical fact.

The sick, the impotent, the halt, the withered, scattered throughout the five porches, are typical of the moral condition, the helplessness and ruin of the people to whom the Lord came, the people Israel. Though they had the Law, the five books of Moses, in which they boasted, yet they were without strength. Laying about in those five porches at the pool could not heal them; grace alone could do that.

Verses 5-9. Among the multitudes was a special case, an impotent man, who had been in that case for thirty-eight years. He is helpless. The remedy is in sight but for him it was unavailing, for he had no power and strength to get into the pool, and no one was there to have mercy on him to assist him.

Here again we have a picture of Israel's condition as under the Law, and in a broader sense, of man in his sinful, helpless condition. The thirty-eight years remind us of the years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness after the Law had been given. But that Law could not help them, as it cannot help the sinner, for he is without strength, like the impotent man who saw the remedy but could not use it. Then the Lord Jesus Christ appeared on the scene to do that which the man could not do. He knew the poor, miserable sufferer. He knew his disease and how it originated, for later He told him "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (Verse 14). And what a comfort it is for God's children that the Lord Jesus still knows every pain, every heartache, every suffering and every disease; yea more than that, we know He is still the same.

How lovingly He then addressed the man, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Was that his earnest will, his deep desire? Hast thou a wish to be made whole? It was addressed to him so that faith might be produced in the heart of the man. Desire and willingness to be healed is all Grace asks of the sinner, and with it acceptance of what is offered. The man answered: "Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled to put me into the pool." He did not answer the question directly yet his reply shows his earnest desire. Perhaps all he expected of the Lord who had spoken to him, was the friendly assistance, when next the water was troubled, to help him at once to it. But the friend of sinners did not touch him, nor make him a promise. From His lips came the word of command, the word of omnipotent power, which now produced the faith needed in the heart of the helpless sufferer. "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Grace had spoken and power is there also. The first word "Arise" was for faith to obey, and as the man obeyed the quickening power of the Lord was manifested. "And immediately, the man was made whole, took up his bed and walked." This is the third miracle reported in the Gospel of John. We have called attention before to the number three, as the number which signifies resurrection and restoration. This healed man, raised up, completely restored, is a type of Israel in that coming third day when they will be raised up and walk before Him (Hosea vi:1-2).

The three miracles as given in this Gospel, the water turned into wine on the third day, the healing of the nobleman's son, and the third miracle, the healing of the impotent man, are all prophetic pictures of what will be when the Lord returns. The healing of the impotent man was a sign for the Jews that the King promised to them was in their midst. The first miracle done after Pentecost when once more the Kingdom was offered to the Jews, was the healing of another impotent man (Acts iii). The use of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, His power, had made him whole, so that he leaped and praised God. It was a miracle to show to the Jews that the same One who had healed the impotent man, who lay in the porch at the pool of Bethesda, the Christ whom they had delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, who was crucified and who died, is risen from the dead and is living. Among the signs of the Kingdom promised to Israel is the sign of the lame man who shall leap as an hart (Isaiah xxxv:6). Both healings in the Gospel of John and in the Book of Acts were witnesses to the Jews that the Lord Jesus is the promised King with the powers of the Kingdom.

Verses 10-16. The healed man at once attracted attention. But it was not, as one would suppose, on account of his miraculous healing, but because he had taken up his bed (a very light thing consisting perhaps only of a rough blanket). That the miracle was witnessed by others who had known the man for many years is certain; yet the Jews, those in authority, did not take notice of it. The evidence of Sabbath-breaking was the chief concern of these extremely self-righteous religionists; and when they found out that it was the Lord Jesus who had healed the man and told him to take up his bed, they were ready to manifest their zeal by killing the Lord. The Sabbath was everything to them; the Lord of the Sabbath they did not want. It is true that bearing of burdens on the Sabbath is mentioned in Nehemiah xiii:19 and Jeremiah xvii:21. But the burdens in both passages mean merchandise, and the command could hardly be applied to a poor man, who had been miraculously healed and who took his belongings from the ground to carry them away.

When the Jews asked the healed man, he told them that he but obeyed the one who had made him whole. If he had manifested such gracious power towards him, how could it be wrong to obey him and take up the bed and walk away? The maliciousness and heart-hardness of the Jews becomes evident when they tried to get more information as to the person who had healed him and told him to take up his bed. They did not care about the healing, the act of mercy and the miracle which had been performed, but they were eager to display their zeal for the Sabbath. The man did not know that it was the Lord Jesus; not could he find out, for the Lord had suddenly disappeared, perhaps in a miraculous way (as the word indicates) the same as in Luke iv:30 and John x:39. But some time later the Lord Jesus found him in the temple. From the words which then our Lord spoke to the man whom He had healed we may gather that it was a special sin which had been responsible for his long affliction. That sin had brought its awful harvest for his body. Here again we see the divine omniscience of our Lord. The man had committed that sin before our Lord had appeared on earth in the form of man; but He knew, for He is God. But what is the worse thing which would happen unto him should he after this deliverance go on in deliberate sinning? Thirty-eight years of helplessness is an awful harvest from sin, but the worse thing is the loss of the soul and eternal punishment. This our Lord solemnly means in speaking of the worse thing.

The motive of the man when he told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him was not evil, but probably because as a good Jew he felt it was his duty. From that moment began the Jewish leaders to persecute the Lord Jesus and sought to kill Him.

Verses 17-18. They had charged Him with breaking the Sabbath. He tells them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Their understanding of the Sabbath was that of a blind and literal legalism; but the Son of God told them that neither God His Father, nor He as one with God, knew any cessation of labor. It is true God rested on the seventh day, but that rest was soon broken by man's sin. He had rested in creation because it was good. But when sin entered in and produced the horrible results of suffering, misery and death, God could no longer rest. He began after the entrance of sin His work of redemption, manifesting His love and His grace. If He had been satisfied with the conditions which sin produced, and continued His rest, He would not be God. But while the Father and the Son (as well as the Holy Spirit) had worked in creation and then rested; the work of redemption began at once when sin and its ruin had come, and ever since it has been as the Lord told the Jews, "My Father worketh hitherto (literally: until now) and I work." And this still is true. While God has found His rest in a sense in the blessed, finished work of His Son on the Cross, who came to work the works of Him who sent Him, the great Sabbath is not yet come and will not come till "God is all in all" and there "shall be no more curse." All this the Jews knew not; equally ignorant of these facts are professing Christians.

But here is a greater truth of vast importance. By uttering this weighty sentence the Lord states His equality with God. If we analyze these few words we discover in them the same great facts which stand out so boldly in the beginning of this Gospel. He is God; He is one with God; He is in fellowship with God and shares His councils and His work. His hearers at once detected the one meaning of this statement. They saw that He claimed a Sonship which was nothing less than Oneness with God. The Jews understood Him in this way. Had He said "Our Father" perhaps no objection would have been raised; but when He said "My Father" they concluded "that God was His own particular Father" in a sense as no other being could claim it.

Dean Alford in his Greek New Testament remarks: "The Jews understood His words to mean nothing short of peculiar, personal Sonship, and thus equality of nature with God. And that this their understanding was the right one, the subsequent discourse testifies. All might in one sense, and the Jews did in a closer sense, call God their, or, our Father; but they at once said that the individual use of 'My Father' by the Lord Jesus had a totally distinct, and in their view a blasphemous, meaning; this latter especially, because He made God a participator in His Sabbath breaking. Thus we obtain from the adversaries of the faith a most important statement of one of its highest and holiest doctrines."

Verses 19-23. In these marvelous words of self-witness our Lord tells now the Jews that they had not misunderstood Him, that He, the Son, is in full union, in complete identification with the Father, that He does nothing without the Father, but all He seeth the Father do He does also. Deniers of the essential Deity of our Lord have tried to twist these words around to prove that He is not God, especially the statement that He can do nothing of Himself. Well said Bengel in his Gnomen: "This is a glory and not an imperfection." The words do not mean limitation, but attest the complete, perfect unity which is between the Father and the Son. In His relation to the Father, the Son can do nothing independently, or separately, from the Father; if He would act independently He would be another God, which would be an impossibility. "He can do nothing of Himself" therefore does not affect the question of power (He is omnipotent), but it is the question of His will; He will not act differently from the Father, from His own independent will. Of course the fact that He, the eternal One, became man also enters into this saying. He is in the place of dependence on earth, yet He does what the Father does, doing His work and carrying out His will.

Much has been written on these great words of our Lord which is very helpful, and it may not be out of order to quote some of the sayings of the servants of Christ of past generations, as today we are surrounded by so many false witnesses, and the leaven of "Unitarianism" as well as "Russellism" and other cults is working, denying the essential Deity of our Lord. Augustinus said tersely: "Our Lord does not say, whatsoever the Father doeth the Son does other things like them, but the very same things. If the Son doeth the same things, and in like manner, then let the

Jew be silenced, the Christian believe, the heretic be convinced; the Son is equal with the Father."

Hilarius (401-449 A. D.) wrote: "Christ is the Son of God because He does nothing of Himself. He is God because whatsoever things the Father doeth, He doeth the same. They are one because they are equal in honor. He is not the Father because He is sent."

Bishop Joseph Hall (1574) made the following paraphrase on verse 19: "I and the Father are one indivisible essence, and our acts are no less inseparable. The Son can do nothing without the will and act of the Father; and even as He is man, can do nothing but what He seeth, agreeable to the will and purpose of His heavenly Father."

Hundreds of similar words of comment could be quoted showing that the leading teachers of the Church agree in their interpretation. If another meaning is given to them it shows how darkened the mind of the natural man is.

In verse 20 our Lord speaks of the Father loving the Son, showing Him all things He doeth and greater works than these, that they might marvel. It is all a matchless setting forth of His Oneness with the Father. Neither statement implies that the Father is superior and the Son inferior. Well has it been said: "This love is not the love of an earthly parent to a beloved child. The 'showing' is not the showing of a teacher to an ignorant scholar. The 'love' is meant to show us that unspeakable unity of heart and affection, which eternally existed and exists between the Father and the Son."* The greater works are explained in the next verses, that is, the power to raise the dead and to quicken them, and His work as Judge. These words show still more His Divine authority and equality with the Father; yet they also have woven in them the fact of His work in incarnation, of redemption as Saviour and Lord. Only God can raise the dead and give them life, whether they are the physically dead or the spiritually dead; God has the power to do this. The same power belongs to the Son of God, not a derived power, by Divine commission, but sovereignty, "*even so* the Son quickeneth whom *He will*."

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*Bishop Ryle.

It is sovereign power. How He exercised and manifested this power the Gospel of John reveals also.

Next our Lord speaks of judgment, and when He does He no longer speaks of the Father doing and He doing the same the Father does. He does not say "The Father judgeth and I judge," but "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Judgment, therefore, is committed into His hands. It is one of His acquired glories, which belong to Him as the risen, glorified man. The occupant of the different judgment thrones is the Son of God, who died for sinners. All judgments are still in the future. The first to be executed will be the judgment seat (the award-seat) of Christ, before whom His own people will have to appear, not to be judged by *their* works, but that their works may be manifested (1 Corinthians v:10). Then follows the judgment of nations which will take place when He has taken His own throne in connection with the earth, after His visible and glorious manifestation. In the age which follows He will judge the earth in righteousness. "God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; wherefore He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii:31). The day in this passage is "the Day of the Lord," which will last a thousand years, during which He reigns over the earth and His redeemed people with Him. The final judgment throne He fills is "the great white throne"; then all the wicked dead will have to face, in that second resurrection, Him whom they rejected.

But more than that, the Son is to be honored and therefore worshipped as the Father is honored, "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." Some have taught that God alone should be worshipped and not the Lord Jesus Christ. In the light of these words of our Lord this invention is completely answered. And all who do not honor the Son do not honor the Father, for He sent Him; rejection of God the Son means rejection of God the Father. This unity with the Father we have elsewhere expressed by our Lord. "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and He that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent me" (Matthew x:40).

"He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me—but on Him that sent Me. And He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me" (John xii:44-45). How anyone in the presence of such words can deny the Deity of the Lord Jesus and His Oneness with God is difficult to understand.

In this great self-witness, our Lord reveals Himself as very God, the Lord of life and death, and as the Judge of all. The words which He speaks next give the practical consequences of this, the manifestation of Himself as the Life-giver and the Judge in connection with man.

Verses 24-27. Four times He uses the word "Verily"—Amen, Amen—emphasizing the solemnity and importance of what He now declares. These words show indeed how He will have to be honored by all men. Those who hear His Word and believe are quickened by Him; the spiritually dead who hear His voice shall live. Thus He is honored as the Life-giver. And those who reject the Son and do not honor Him by believing on Him, will be compelled to honor Him by undergoing judgment.

And what a blessed, precious assurance it is the Lord gives in the twenty-fourth verse! It has been used countless times in the salvation of the souls of men, and in leading nominal and doubting professing believers out of the mists of uncertainty, into the sunshine of grace and perfect assurance. The Son of God gives the positive, unchangeable assurance, that sinners who are by nature destitute of "eternal life," who are children of wrath, can have eternal life, and not come into judgment, and pass out of death into life.

We have frequently asked professing Christians the question: "Do you know that you have eternal life?" Many times we received the answer—"I hope so"— while others said: "It is presumption to be too sure about going to heaven"—as if going to heaven would be decided at the time of physical death. But eternal life is not something bestowed when man dies physically, but it is a present gift and a present possession. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." That it is something in the believer, which he possesses as abiding in Him, we learn by way of contrast from 1 John iii:15, where we read of having "eternal life abiding in him." It is the great, fundamental need of the human soul, to pass out of the state of spiritual death into life, to receive life, eternal life. This eternal life, which man does not possess because he is in the state of spiritual death, is received, fully assured and forever bestowed by hearing Christ's Word and believing God (not *on* God) who sent Him. "He that heareth My Word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life." God sent His Son into the world that He might give eternal life to sinners dead and lost. Therefore believing Him means the gift of life, the impartation of the new nature, which is spiritual, eternal life. The Lord Jesus says nothing about works, nor about ordinances or anything else; hearing and believing is all needed for the present reception and abiding possession of eternal life. Thus every sinner who heareth His Word and believeth Him who sent Him *hath*, not shall have, but *hath*, eternal life. If any one questions this, it means nothing less than questioning the truthfulness of the Son of God. Acceptance of the "Verily" of the Lord means assurance and perfect peace. Furthermore, in having this eternal life, judgment is forever gone (not condemnation)—"cometh not into judgment, but *is* passed out of death into life" (not *shall pass*). Sinners saved by grace, in possession of that life which is in Him, can never come into judgment; the judgment seat before which the believer has to appear does not decide whether he is saved or lost, but the believer's works will there be manifested.

The hour in verse 25 began with the declaration of these truths by our Lord and covers the entire dispensation, the day of grace. The dead are the spiritually dead. What a testimony the Son of God gives as to the condition of the whole race! What a rebuke to those teachers who deny the truth the infallible, omniscient Son of God states! Those who receive life are they who hear His voice, that is, who hear and believe.

When next the Lord speaks of the Father having life in Himself and that He gave to the Son to have life in Himself, and that He hath given Him authority to judge, He speaks of Himself as the Son of Man, the sent One of God. As Son of Man He quickens, and as Son of Man He will judge. The day in which He quickens still goes on, but some day it will end. Then comes another hour, of which He speaks in the verses which follow.

Verses 28-29. Here then He speaks of His authority to raise the physically dead and to judge. That hour has not yet come, nor will it come as long as the gracious purpose of the present age remains unaccomplished. When this is reached, when the out-called company, the Church is gathered, then begins that future hour of which the Lord speaks. His voice will be heard to call forth those that are in the graves. But the Lord does not teach here a general resurrection, when the righteous and the unrighteous are raised up together. Such a general resurrection is nowhere mentioned in the Word of God. Matthew xxv:31-46 is mostly used to confirm the belief in such a resurrection; but this passage does not concern the dead at all, but it reveals a judgment of living nations. Our Lord teaches that there will be two resurrections. The first will be the resurrection of those who have practiced good and theirs will be a resurrection of life. This class are they who believed, and as a result practiced good, lived a righteous life. The second resurrection is the resurrection of judgment, and those concerned in it did not practice good, because they believed not and did not pass from death unto life, and hence they come into judgment; while those who believed have share in life and are exempt from judgment. The details of these two resurrections are not revealed here, nor the chronological order of events preceding and following the two resurrections. The Spirit of God unfolds this in the Epistles, and the last Book, the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaks more fully of these two resurrections.

Every Christian who searches his Bible knows that the voice of the Son of God will be heard first when He descends from heaven with the shout (1 Thessalonians iv:13-18). That shout will open the graves of those who have died in Christ; their bodies which slept* will rise, and all believers, those who heard His voice and who believed Him that sent Him, who live in that most blessed day, when His voice breaks the silence of many centuries, will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Thus begins the first resurrection. The risen Saints, with those who were changed, will be caught up together in clouds to meet Him in the air.

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*Sleep of the body, not the soul.

On earth the tribulation rages after that; Satan and the beasts will have control. Then others die the martyr's death. They are beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God. They worshipped not the beast, neither his image. And these tribulation Saints will also be raised up when the great tribulation is ended (Revelation xx:4). Then we read "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Revelation xx:5). The thousand years are literal years when the Lord Jesus Christ will reign and His Saints with Him; then He judgeth the earth in righteousness. And after the thousand years are ended His voice will be heard again, and a second resurrection takes place of the wicked dead. The description of it we find in Revelation xx:11-15.

Verse 30-31. Some have pronounced this utterance of our Lord as one of the most difficult in the entire Gospel. We pass by these supposed difficulties, for the believing heart finds none in these words. It is evident that our Lord speaks once more of His oneness with the Father, which makes it unalterably impossible to do anything solely of Himself. His relation to the Father, as one with Him, necessitates that all He does must be done just as the Father does it, and never separately from Him. As very man He had of course a will, but that was in entire subjection to the Father; it could not be otherwise. An ancient writer (Chrysostom) comments on this verse as follows: "Just as when we say it is impossible for God to do wrong, we do not impute to Him any weakness, but confess in Him an unutterable power; so also when Christ saith 'I can of mine own self do nothing,' the meaning is that it is impossible,—my nature admits not—that I could do anything contrary to the Father." These words therefore do not mean, as some teach, that He is not very God, but they are the evidences of His oneness with God. It is the same truth as we found it in the nineteenth verse of this chapter. And He judged as He heard, therefore His judgment must be just and will be just in all the future judgments committed into His hands as the Son of Man. It shows that all He heard (from the Father) is manifested by Himself, and therefore what He utters is the Word and Will of God. But if He bore witness alone, just He Himself, this witness would not be true. It does not mean in the least that if He were only to witness of Himself, that this witness would be a false witness. He spoke to the Jews, and in point of law a self-witness, uncorroborated, is invalid and open to suspicion. The law demanded at least two witnesses. And of the other witnesses He speaks next.

Verse 32. Not a few have applied these words to the witness which John the Baptist gave of Him. But this is incorrect. The use of the word "witnesseth" excludes this application, for John had witnessed, but had passed away; but here is One who witnesseth, that is a witness which continues. The witness whom our Lord means is the Father Himself. Then follows the threefold witness of the Father—the witness of John the Baptist; the works the Father gave Him to do, bearing witness that the Father had sent Him; and the witness of the Scriptures.

Verses 33-35. They themselves had sent unto that remarkable prophet who had arisen in their midst, John the Baptist (John i:19). As the witness he had borne testimony to the Truth. They well knew the great witness this unimpeachable witness had borne in pointing to Him as greater than himself. In his light they had been willing to rejoice for a season, when all Judea and Jerusalem went out with many of the religious leaders of the people. The Lord thus bears witness that what John had said concerning Himself, that He is the Christ, the Lamb of God, who was before him, is true. But did He need this testimony? Was it necessary that He should receive a testimony from man as to His own person? Or did He seek such a testimony as others do? His claim does in no way depend upon such a human witness, but He permits it and uses it that they might believe on Him and be saved. How this reveals His loving heart, so deeply concerned about their salvation! But John's witness pales in the presence of the greater witness.

Verses 36-38. John did no miracles, yet for a time at least they were ready to receive him, and believed that he might be the Christ. The miracles Christ had performed were the positive evidences that God had sent Him. The honoured Nicodemus, the great teacher in Israel, was convinced of that (Chapter iii-2). When later in Solomon's porch they asked Him "Tell us plainly if Thou art the Christ," He answered, "The works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear witness of Me" (x:25). They could never deny the fact of His miracles. The system which is far worse and more damnable than anything else, the Destructive Criticism, may deny His miracles; the thousands who beheld them, who saw the blind restored to sight, the demons driven out, the lepers cleansed and the dead raised, could never doubt. They did not dare to deny them, but some attempted to explain them in that blasphemous suggestion, that they were wrought by the powers of Satan. (See Matthew xii). They were the miracles given to Him to do by the Father; the display of the Father's power as well as His own.

"Five things should always be noted about our Lord's miracles. (1) Their number, they were not a few only, but very many. (2) Their greatness, they were not little, but mighty interferences with the ordinary course of nature. (3) Their publicity, they were not done generally in a corner, but in open day, and before many witnesses, and often before enemies. (4) Their character, they were almost always works of love, mercy and compassion, helpful and beneficial to man, and not merely barren exhibition of power. (5) Their direct appeal to men's senses, they were visible, and would bear any examination. The difference between them and the boasted miracles of Rome, on all these points, is striking and instructive."*

And besides these miracles the Father had witnessed of Him. His voice they had never heard, nor had they ever seen any appearance of Him. They had no knowledge of God, nor had they His Word abiding in themselves, the Word in which the Father's voice is heard concerning His Son. For this reason they did not believe on Him whom the Father had sent. To believe on Christ necessitates first of all belief in the Word of God; when the Word of God is disowned, Christ also must eventually be rejected. This important truth, the witness of the Scriptures, is next given by our Lord.

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*Expository Thoughts on John.

Verses 39-43. They searched the Scriptures (the Old Testament) and thought that they found in them eternal life, but they really did not search the Scriptures, for if they had they would have recognized Him whom the Father sent. "They testify of Me." In Hebrews x:7 we also find the same testimony by our Lord, "In the volume of the Book it is written of Me." Martin Luther once asked, "What Book and what Person?"—"There is only one Book" was his reply —"the Scriptures; and only one Person—Jesus Christ." The Lord Jesus Christ is throughout the Scriptures revealed in many ways, not only in direct prophecies, but in types and in the levitical institutions. All this is known to every child of God. But it needs restatement in these days when the authority and inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures are so widely denied. Our Lord endorses the Jewish Canon, as it was then, and as it is now, as the Word and revelation of Himself. The Critics, boasting of scholarship, audaciously calling it even "reverend Criticism," deny this completely. If we refer them to this passage they tell us that our Lord but accommodated Himself to the current opinion of His times, but that in reality He did not mean to assert His own belief in these writings. What this involves we would rather leave unsaid.

The Scriptures bear their infallible witness both to His Person and to His work. How well Philip of Bethsaida spoke when he said to Nathanael—"We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets did write" (i:45). He had searched the Scriptures, hence he believed on Christ as the promised one. And we also must search the Scriptures and find anew that they testify of Him, whom we know as our Saviour-Lord. Then follows that saddest of all words, "Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life." What a word this is! It gives us the solemn reason why men are lost.

The Greek is more emphatic than the English version; it is more than "Ye will not come"; it means literally rendered "Ye do not will to come." After hearing His wonderful testimony, the different witnesses He had marshalled, they still refused to believe on Him, and had no heart and no desire to come to Him to receive that life which He alone can give. But He did not speak thus in their hearing because He desired honor from men. It was spoken for only one purpose, for their own good. But He knew as the omniscient One what was in their hearts; though they professed to be worshippers of God, the real love of God had no place in them. This fact was evidenced by not receiving Him who had come to them as the love-gift of the Father. If they loved and honored the Father they would never have rejected the Son.

Then He uttered a prophecy. "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." The words have been true in the past. After the death and resurrection of our Lord, during the first century of our era, over three score false Messiahs appeared among the Jews. They all came in their own names and were miserable deceivers, yet no matter how brazen they were, each had a vast following, and each led them to disaster. But this prophecy remains still to be fulfilled, for our Lord predicts that final Antichrist, the man of sin. The argument often raised about the personality of this Antichrist is settled by this passage of Scripture. He will be a Jew, for the Jews would not accept a Messiah unless he is of their own race. This Antichrist is the second Beast in Revelation xiii, coming out of Israel's land; the first Beast is the little horn of Daniel vii, the head of the Roman Empire and as such an apostate Gentile. The early Church believed that the Lord predicted in His words the Antichrist as he is to be revealed before the second Coming of Christ.

Verses 44-47. According to the word of the Lord, those who look for the honor which comes from man cannot believe. Seeking the praise of man is the constant tendency of the heart of man and excludes true faith, for true faith looks not to man but to God, and seeks the honor which comes from the only God. Such was the condition of the Jews and especially the condition of their leaders. And such is the condition of the great professing Christendom and their ritualistic and rationalistic heads. Still they boasted in Moses. While the Jews speak of Abraham as "our father," they call Moses "our teacher." By not believing the writings of Moses, Moses himself in whom they trusted became their accuser. Even today they read his books, the Pentateuch, and these are the accusing witnesses of their unbelief. If they believed Moses they would also believe Him, for Moses wrote of Christ. Every believer who studies the five books which were written by Moses knows what a wealth of truth they contain relating to the Person of our Lord and His work as Prophet, Priest and King. It is simply unsearchable. Yet that pernicious, infidel school, Destructive Criticism, claims that Moses never wrote anything and some go so far as to doubt the very existence of this man. But how true what the Son of God says in conclusion of this remarkable discourse. "But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" Reject Moses and you reject Me. Such has been the road of apostasy and the end is not yet reached. Well has the late William Kelly summed it up in the following paragraph.

"What an estimate of the authority of those very Scriptures, which self-sufficient men have assailed as untrustworthy! They dare to tell us that they are neither Mosaic in origin, nor Messianic in testimony, but a mass of legends which do not even cohere in their poor and human reports of early days. On the other hand, the Judge of all declares that these Scriptures testify of Him, and that Moses wrote of Him, setting the written word in point of authority above even His words. As the Lord Jesus Christ and Rationalism are thus in direct antagonism, the Christian has no hesitation which to receive and which to reject, for one cannot serve both masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. So it is, and must be, and ought to be; for Christ and Rationalism (Destructive Criticism) are irreconcilable. Those who pretend to serve both have no principle as to either, and are the most corrupting of all men. They not only do not possess the Truth, but they make the love of it impossible, and are enemies alike of God and man."

CHAPTER VI

Verses 1-4. John passes over many months of the ministry of our Lord and does not report what else happened in Jerusalem. The great miracle of the healing of the impotent man and the subsequent discourse of our Lord, as given in the previous chapter is not mentioned by the synoptics, and John in his Gospel does not record the greater part of the ministry of the Lord in Galilee. In all this we see the divine guiding hand of the Spirit of God. He did not lead Matthew, Mark and Luke to write of the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda and the words which were spoken then, for He intended to use the pen of John to reveal these things in harmony with the scope of the fourth Gospel.

A great multitude followed Him. Mark explains how they followed the Lord as He crossed the lake. "And the people saw them departing, and many knew Him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto Him" (Mark vi:33). While the Lord entered into a ship to take Him to the other side of the lake, the multitude went on foot around the lake to the place where the ship landed. What kind of a multitude they were we learn from the chapter itself. Like those mentioned in the close of the second chapter, they believed in a certain way because they had seen the miracles. Many of them evidently claimed discipleship, but after the words of our Lord spoken concerning Himself as the bread of life many of these professing disciples went back and walked no more with Him (Verse 66). The time was immediately before another Passover, here significantly called a feast of the Jews.

Verses 5-14. This great event is also fully recorded by the three preceding Gospels, where we find additional facts connected with the feeding of the five thousand. He saw this great multitude and was moved with compassion for they were as sheep having no shepherd (Mark vi:34); He also taught them many things.

Here we read that He asked Philip "whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" From Luke's Gospel we learn that the place was near Bethsaida. Philip was of that place

(John i:44) and that is probably the reason why the Lord asked him about supplying the need of the hungry people. But He did not ask thus because He was perplexed; it was to try Philip. Philip might have answered—Oh! Lord, Thou knowest and Thine is all power! One would expect such an answer, for Philip had heard Nathanael's great confession "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." But the question the Lord asked is blessedly guarded by the Spirit of God through the writer of the record—"He Himself knew what He would do." The miracle of the feeding of the multitude was one of the works the Father gave Him to do; He knew all about what He would do and what should take place, for He is the same who gave Israel the bread in the wilderness (Exodus xvi). Then the brother of Simon Peter, Andrew, called His attention to the lad with the five barley loaves and the two fishes, and he was but a little boy (the meaning of the Greek word), hence the loaves must have been very small. But how could this insignificant supply satisfy the needs of this vast crowd of people? He did not need the two hundred pennyworth; the little things are chosen by Him to manifest His power; yea, He could have fed them all without the use of the five loaves and the two fishes. Then He speaks. They were told to sit down, as we learn from Mark's Gospel, in perfect order in ranks of hundreds and fifties. What a beautiful scene it must have been, these five thousand men, besides the women and children, peacefully resting in the place of "much grass"! It suggests the green pastures into which He leads His people (Psalm xxiii:2; John x:9).

And with what expectancy they all must have looked to Him as He stood in the midst! Then He took the loaves and after giving thanks He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples distributed to them that sat down. It must have been in that moment, after He had given thanks and handed the loaves to the disciples, that the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes took place. Being one of His great signs, wrought by Him, the omnipotent Lord, it is unexplainable. There is a tendency manifested in our times, even among men who hold to the inspiration of the Bible, to explain some of the miracles of the Bible as natural occurrences. This has been done with the miracle of the parting of the Red Sea, the miracle of the sun standing still in Joshua's day, and others. As soon as a miracle can be explained it ceases to be a miracle. Some of the rationalistic critics have attempted to explain away this miracle also. Some have suggested that the seated company all brought out the provisions they carried with them, and that this is how they were fed. But all these explanations, the inventions of pure infidelity, are so ridiculously silly that they do not deserve an answer. It has been well said "it requires more faith to believe their explanations than to believe the miracle and take it as we find it." Without question the feeding of this immense company was a wonderful manifestation of the power of the Creator,, who, though in creature's form, had not divested Himself of the attributes of Godhead.

And after this miraculous feast provided by Himself He commanded that the fragments be gathered up "that nothing be lost," another wonderful fact, that the omnipotent Lord should care even for the fragments of what He called into existence. How true it is in all His creation. In nature, so wonderfully fashioned and ordered by His hands, nothing is lost. And if He thus orders and maintains such a principle it behooves us to reckon with it in all our ways.

Twelve baskets were filled with the fragments, abundant evidence that a great miracle had been performed, for what was left over was perhaps a hundred times more than the original supply.*

The great sign He wrought has also a striking dispensational meaning. While He revealed Himself thus as the omnipotent Lord, the loving, caring Lord, He is likewise seen as Israel's King. We read in Psalm cxxxii a prophecy which fits in with the scene before us. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest forever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread" (Verses 13-15). This will be fully realized in the coming kingdom. And He had come as the promised King; He was in their midst and when He thus satisfied them with bread and abundantly blessed their provision, they might have beheld in Him their King. The twelve baskets too have a meaning, for twelve is the number of Israel. That they had some conception of all this we learn from what followed. When they saw this miracle they said "This is in truth the Prophet that should come into the world." The reference is to Deuteronomy xviii:15-16, and from John i:21 we learn that the delegation from Jerusalem suspected that John the Baptist might be "that Prophet." Ancient Jewish interpretation states that the Prophet promised in Deuteronomy is the Messiah.

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*It was a custom of the Jews that when they are together they should leave something to those that served. The little portion which each one left was called "the servants' part." The baskets were probably the baskets the Jews carried with them in their travels.

Verse 15. Perhaps they gathered in groups talking together and scheming to make Him a leader, to make Him a king, but not "The King." And He knew their carnal plans. This was but another attempt inspired by the same being, who on the mountain top had shown to Him the Kingdoms of the earth, and had offered them to Him. Here through the enthused multitudes, because He had satisfied their wants, Satan tried to achieve his end once more, quite willing to have Him to receive the crown without going first to the cross, where alone His crown rights in redemption through the shedding of His blood could forever be secured and established. But all they meant was to use Him for their own selfish ends, to make Him some kind of a ringleader, to lead in a revolt against the Roman government, so that they might be freed from the Gentile yoke. They wanted to make him a king; they erred and knew not the Scriptures, which foretold that He must suffer first and that God Himself would enthrone Him as King upon the holy hill of Zion, to receive the nations for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possessions. Then when He appears crowned with many crowns, as King of kings and Lord of lords, when the true remnant of Israel bows before Him in true humiliation and looks upon Him whom they pierced, the promised blessings of the cxxxii Psalm, and the many other prophecies as to the millennial glories, will be accomplished. And when here He suddenly departs into a mountain alone to spend the whole night there, we see readily how this foreshadows His ascension, to be in the presence of God throughout this age. Their scheming to use Him in a carnal way had revealed their own heart. They knew nothing of a true turning to God. What Hosea had declared, "I will go and return to my place" was fulfilled "till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face." And that will be "in their affliction" (the coming great tribulation) when they will say "Come, and let us return unto the Lord" (See Hosea v:15; vi:1-3).

Verse 16-21. The sea, the night during which He is absent, the storm, are symbolical of the present age. The incident is fully reported in Matthew's Gospel. (See our Exposition of Matthew.) It is thus because of the dispensational-Jewish character of the first Gospel. When we read in that Gospel of Peter leaving the little ship to go forth to meet the Lord, we have a beautiful type of the Church, while the ship with the frightened disciples represents the Jewish remnant as it existed when He left the earth to return to heaven, and a similar remnant which will be on earth before He returns from heaven for their deliverance. Like it was on that sea so it is with this age. It is getting darker and the wind more boisterous. And how God's people even now may say "it is now dark and Jesus has not yet come." But we know He will come for His own. And after that comes the great darkness and the great storm with which this age closes.

Then another miracle took place. He came walking on the sea. The so-called laws of nature were entirely suspended. He who is the author of these laws can do as it pleaseth Him. Of course "the scholarly" and "reverend" critics have also set aside this miracle, and probably some scientist will explain it in some "natural way" or that it may have been an "illusion." But the giving up of the belief in the miraculous must lead ultimately, and in most cases speedily, to the giving up of all revealed Truth. The disciples knew they were face to face with a supernatural occurrence, for they were afraid. But precious is that voice which was heard by them above the noise of breaking waves and howling tempest—"It is I; be not afraid." May we all, dear readers, hear that same voice speaking to our hearts. The practical remark has often been made, that many of the things which frighten Christians and fill them with anxiety, would cease to frighten them if they would endeavor to see the Lord Jesus in all, ordering every providence, and overruling everything, so that not a hair falls to the ground without Him. They are happy who hear His voice through the thickest cloud and darkness and above the loudest winds and storms, saying "It is I; be not afraid."

And when He came, how glad they were to receive Him. And when He came, how quickly the storm ended and the ship was brought to the land. So will it be when He comes again. The darkness will end; the storm will cease. His Church will be with Him and the remnant of Israel will be brought to the promised haven.

What we have followed up to this point may be termed the introduction to the great truths concerning the special message of this Gospel, the message of eternal life, which we find in the rest of this great chapter.

Verses 22-25. The multitudes were evidently greatly puzzled about the disappearance of Him who had fed them so miraculously. They did not know how He could have come to Capernaum. They took shipping and had come to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. A difficulty has been raised here by the supposition that all the five thousand men had followed Him. Criticism, trying to pick flaws, has stated how impossible it would have been to have ships for this large company of people to cross the lake. But the supposition is incorrect. It does not say that all those who had been fed by the Lord on the previous day crossed Tiberias in ships. Matthew tells us that He sent the multitudes away (Matthew xiv:22). The great majority went to their homes, or continued their journey towards Jerusalem to celebrate Passover there. There is nothing whatever in the text to show that all the people crossed the lake, probably only a small number followed Him. They found Him right on the sea shore. But if we read on in this chapter we discover that the words which our Lord spoke at this time, the great discourse, was not delivered at the sea shore, but in the synagogue of Capernaum. "These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum" (Verse 59). This is the conclusive evidence that not all the five thousand men were present, but just a small number. The question prompted by their curiosity, "Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?" He left unanswered.

Verses 26-29. The Lord, the searcher of hearts, knew why they had followed Him. They did not seek Him because they believed on Him as the Son of God; they did not even seek Him, as it is stated in the beginning of the chapter, "because they saw His miracles," but they sought Him for a very selfish reason. Their motive was thoroughly carnal. "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Before this they wanted to make Him King and He suddenly disappeared, because He knew that the same selfish desire was behind it. And so He is still the discerner of the thoughts of men and knows the innermost motives of the heart. How many there are today who make a religious profession, who claim to seek the Lord and follow Him, but the "loaves and fishes" are underneath all their religiousness. This is especially true today in some heathen lands where destitution prevails and relief from earthly want is offered; it is likewise true in the larger cities of our land.

Then He resumes His blessed teaching concerning eternal life. He exhorts not to labour for the food which perisheth but for that food which endureth unto eternal life. They had followed Him strenuously to obtain perishing food, that which sustains the physical life; He tells them to work for the food which abideth unto life eternal and this eternal life, which man cannot obtain by working for it, He, the Son of Man whom the Father sealed, is able to give. The latter expression means that He as Son of Man is accredited by God as His Son, sealed by the gift of the Spirit, with power to give eternal life (Chapter xvii:2). He is the giver of both, the life and the food that abides unto eternal life; and He Himself is the life and the food. In His own blessed, all-wise way He begins once more to feel His way to their hearts and consciences as He had done with the woman at the well. They ran after Him, exerted all their physical energy to get more of the bread that perisheth, as the woman had come for the water to Samaria's well. He uses their selfish desire to teach them the greater need.

Henry Martyn, the noble Apostle of India and Persia, who gave his young life in October 1812, was greatly discouraged in preaching to the poor Hindoos at Dinapore, India. He was tempted to give up the work entirely for he discovered they did not care a bit for his preaching, they had no desire to listen to the Gospel, and only came for temporal relief, to receive the bread that perisheth. But one day the young man was reading the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John and when he read this verse he said: "If the Lord Jesus was not ashamed to preach to mere bread-seekers, who am I, that I should give over in disgust?" He had learned from Him and so can we follow His blessed example.

And what answer did they give Him? It is the answer of the darkened heart of the natural man. "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" He had spoken of "Labouring not for the food which perisheth" and now they are ready to work* for the food that abideth; they speak of working the works of God. Their poor hearts did not realize that they were sinners, that the guilt and curse of sin was resting upon them; nor did they reckon with the Holy character of God. They thought themselves capable of satisfying God with their works, and by working obtain life and favour with God. What the human heart was then it is now. It has not changed in the least, but is still as blind and corrupt as it always has been. It is the "Cain-heart" and though there may be a religious profession, a form of godliness, as Cain had it, yet it is solemnly true of the natural man as it was of Cain, "the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans iii:17-18). The natural man thinks he can do something and by doing he will make himself acceptable with God. And thus they speak of "the golden rule," as if man had inherent capacity to practice it. Or someone else says "do some good deed every day"; as if good deeds are the way to peace and glory. Even pagans have done this, as it is said of Emperor Titus that he declared when a day passed without a good deed, "I have lost a day."

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*The word "work" is the same in the Greek as "labor" in the preceding verse.

Without laying bare the delusion of their hearts or condemning their presumption, the Lord told them what they were to do. "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." It is the same as in the previous chapter. "He that heareth my words and believeth Him that sent Me hath eternal life" (v:24). The only thing they could do was to believe on Him, and this faith in Him is the work of God, while the object of faith is He whom the Father sent, the Son of God. This is the common starting point for every sinner; there cannot, nor ever will be, another. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans iv:4-5). Later when an awakened sinner cried out "What must I do to be saved?" the answer was given at once by the Spirit of God, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi:31). This is still the answer to the most momentous question of human existence. Faith may therefore well be termed the greatest work of all works; the one work which pleaseth God, for without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Verses 30-40. The words of the Lord to believe brought forth a manifestation of their unbelief. While He has said that the work of God is to believe on Him whom the Father hath sent, they demanded a sign, which they could see and then believe, not on Him, but believe Him. Is spite of having witnessed that great sign, the feeding of the multitude on the previous day, they ask for a sign, and the question "What dost thou work?" It has always been so with the Jews; only when they saw the signs which Moses and Aaron did in their presence they believed. This tendency is stated by Paul in the Epistle to the Corinthians, "The Jews require a sign" (1 Corinthians i:22). Their reasoning must have been something like this—"He did a miracle in feeding the multitudes, but what is this in comparison with what happened in the history of our fathers? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; he, that is Moses, gave them bread from heaven. Moses fed a far greater number than this man fed; his miracle is not as great as the miracle Moses did. What sign showest thou us, that we may see, and believe Thee?"

But they were mistaken and the Lord corrects their mistake. Not Moses gave them that bread from heaven, "but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." From the words of the unbelieving Jews we learn that they at least believed in the historical fact that their forefathers were miraculously fed in the wilderness. The modern Bible Criticism rejects this and denies the truthfulness of the record in Exodus. What evil such a denial involves we learn from this passage, for our Lord confirms the miracle in the wilderness; a denial therefore impeaches His knowledge and His veracity. But while our Lord confirmed the truthfulness of the event, He speaks of the true bread from heaven, which the Father giveth, the bread which is come down from heaven, that is, He Himself. "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." He is more than that manna which was given; He has come from heaven, not to sustain physical life, but to give eternal life, not for Israel alone, but for the world.

Then they answered Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." Like the Samaritan woman, who had said when the Lord spoke of living water "give me this water," they felt that He spoke of something higher and better which they were not able to grasp. Then He spoke, as only He could speak, yet to ears which would not hear nor understand. "I am the Bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." Even so He had spoken to the Samaritan at Jacob's well, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." Both water and bread are necessary for human existence, and as such indispensable. But man's spiritual need is life, and the Son of Man who came from heaven is that life, and sustains it; apart from Him, there is no life for sinful man.

As we follow the wonderful words of our Lord concerning Himself as the bread of life, we shall see the blessed way in which He leads on in the true and full meaning of this term. Here he states the fact that he is the bread of life, and that "He that cometh unto Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." Man must come to Him and believe on Him in order not to hunger and not to thirst, but to be satisfied. The words "Come" and "Believe" mean practically the same thing. What He is and what He gives must be appropriated, and that is accomplished by coming to Him, and believing on Him. To come to Christ is to believe on Him, and to believe on Him is to come to Him. Both expressions mean that act of the soul whereby, under a sense of its sins and necessity, it flees to Christ, lays hold on Christ, trusts in Christ and casts itself on Christ. "Coming" is the soul's movement towards Christ. "Believing" is the soul's venture on Christ. And He assures us that He will satisfy. He satisfies the soul to the full, and the soul who trusteth in Him, though weak and erring, shall never hunger nor thirst in all eternity; believers in Christ can never be cast off nor can they ever be forsaken.* But he knew their unbelieving hearts; they had seen Him, yet believed not. They would not believe and come to Him to have life, to receive the true bread. Such is the unbelieving heart of man.

Who then will come unto Him? He gives the answer. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh unto Me I will in nowise cast out." Blessed and most precious as these words are they have occasioned a great deal of controversy. What is known as "Calvinism" has made much of the first clause, while the system called "Arminianism" has used the second part of the statement of our Lord. The first question which confronts us is touching the word "all." The literal meaning of the Greek is not all persons, but "everything," for it is a neuter singular, and not a masculine plural. It means therefore the whole company of His elect people whom the Father has given to the Son. This gift was made to the Son by the Father before the foundation of the world (Ephesians i:4); it is the election of God in His own Sovereignty.

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*The better translation is "shall in nowise hunger" . . . "shall in nowise thirst." It is the same as in John x,"shall in nowise perish"; words which speak of the assurance of salvation, that believers in Christ are saved and safe.

There is an elect body, and of this body our Lord speaks, that it is given to Him and that each member of that elect body will come to Him. This is a blessed and most comforting truth for God's people. They are the gift of the Father to the Son, a gift He made when there was no world and no human being. Often the question has been asked by those who do not believe in God's electing grace—how can I know that I really belong to that elect company? Every believer who has accepted Christ and belongs to Him can rest assured that he belongs to this elect body, and is given to the Son by the Father. Beza said, "Faith in Christ is a certain testimony of our election, and consequently of our future glorification." And all who are given to Christ will also come to Him; no power can keep them from coming. Of course here are mysteries which our poor finite minds cannot solve nor fully understand. We believe the plain statements of Scripture as to election, but we also believe that the Gospel message is for all and knows nothing of election. In "The Gospel and its Ministry" the late Sir Robert Anderson gives valuable light on the question which has puzzled so many Christians.

"When the gift of life was proffered us, we were conscious in accepting it that we did so freely, voluntarily. . . . But now that we have received the message, and are come within the scene of joy and blessing to which it bid us, we have to learn that, in a deeper sense and fuller still, grace is sovereign. The Gospel of our salvation spanned the open door of grace as we approached it; above the inner portal, we now read the words, 'Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.'

"And surely this mystery of election is both fitted and intended to bring deep blessing to the believing heart; but the sad fact is too patent to be ignored, that with a vast majority of Christians it is so inseparably linked with controversy as to be removed from blessing altogether. Upon one side, the plain testimony of Scripture is tampered with, if not rejected; upon the other, the doctrine of election is asserted with a narrowness which is uncongenial, if not absolutely incompatible with truth.—How can grace be compatible with election? The Gospel proclaims reconciliation for all and grace is 'salvation-bringing to all men.' Election on the other hand, assumes that the believer's blessings are the result of a divine decree. These, it is objected, are wholly inconsistent, and one or the other of them must be explained away. Doubtless they may appear to be incompatible, but to maintain that therefore they are so in fact, is to put reason above revelation, or in other words to place man above God."

That God wants all men to be saved and is not willing that any should perish shows that hyper-Calvinism, which claims that God has foreordained a part of the human race to eternal damnation, cannot be true. And here our Lord adds another statement, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in nowise cast out." Here then is His own gracious assurance that He will receive every one who cometh unto Him; He will in nowise cast out those who have believed on Him. All may come to Him; all are invited to come and those who do come are received and kept by Him. Whatever may happen they can never be cast out. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will who hath sent Me, that of all He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." He came down from heaven (another great witness to His pre-existence) and He came to do the will of God, the will which concerns the salvation of those given to Him, and none of them can be lost, and that body will be raised up when the consummation comes. The fuller revelation as to the first resurrection, the resurrection of those who died having believed on Him, and the changing of those who live and believe on Him when He comes for His Saints (1 Thessalonians iv:13-18) was not given by our Lord while on earth, but this blessed Hope in its full revelation was made known in a special way to the Apostle Paul. It belongs to the "many things" which the Lord promised to reveal "afterwards," that is after His death and resurrection.

Then once more the blessed and assuring statement, which should fill the heart of every child of God with joy, and his lips with praises—"every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have eternal life."

Verses 41-46. The Lord had finished His testimony concerning Himself as the bread come down from heaven. They had listened to Him and it may have been at this point, when He had arrived at the synagogue, where He continued to speak the words which follow. Then the Jews murmured at Him, like their fathers did in the wilderness. They objected to what He had said as to being "the bread of life which came down from heaven," and the reason why they objected was because they thought Him to be the son of Joseph. "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?" And their murmurings would have been fully justified, if what they said was true. If He was "the son of Joseph," if Joseph was His father, and if He was therefore born like any other man was born, then His claim to be the bread come down from heaven was not true. And what the Jews said at that time we hear today throughout the camp of Christendom, a brazen denial of His Virgin birth. If this denial were true then He would not be the Saviour of man, nor the bread of life. Thus the Virgin birth is the great foundation rock of our faith.

The Jews might have known from their own Scripture that the Messiah had to be born of a Virgin (Isaiah vii:14). The blessed facts of His birth, as found in the first chapter of Matthew and in the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, were not known to the Jews at that time. And the Lord answered them, "Murmur not among yourselves." From this we may conclude that the murmuring was done secretly. They must have formed small groups standing around and reasoning in secret about Him. He knew their thoughts. But in answering them He did not explain the mystery of His Virgin birth. He knew He was surrounded by unbelievers, enemies who would before long deliver Him into the hands of the Gentiles. To tell such that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, that Joseph was not His father, would have been that against which He warned, "Cast not pearls before swine." He goes deeper in His words than a refutal of their erroneous belief and rejection of His claim. In His answer the Lord Jesus utters the same truth as in verses 37-40. "No man can come to me, except the Father who

hath sent me draw him." But while in the former passage He had spoken of the Father *giving* Him those which constitute the elect company, here He speaks of the Father *drawing*. Those who are given to Him by the Father cannot come to Him and really believe on Him, unless the Father draws them to come. "The nature of man," it has been well said, "since the fall is so corrupt and depraved, that even when Christ is made known and preached to him, he will not come to Him and believe on Him without the special grace of God inclining his will, and giving him a disposition to come. Moral suasion and advice alone will not bring him. He must be 'drawn.' This is no doubt a very humbling truth, and one which in every age has called forth the hatred and opposition of man. The favorite notion of man is that he can do what he likes, repent or not repent, believe or not believe, come to Christ or not come,entirely at his own discretion. In fact man likes to think that his salvation is in his own power. Such notions are flatly contradictory to the text before us. The words of our Lord are clear and unmistakable and cannot be explained away." And what about the modern methods in big evangelistic campaigns, where every possible device is used to have men and women take a stand, and then join some religious affiliation.*
Cards are signed, there is handshaking, "hitting the trail," a rather unsuited term for the blessed Gospel, and there are other schemes to bring men and women to decision. To the writer it has always appeared as if such methods need not to be applied, if we believe that the Father will draw every soul, whom He has given to the Son, and that He will draw them to Him, to believe on Him, in His own wonderful way. The great business of the Evangelist is to preach the Gospel in a plain and simple way, and leave the drawing to the Spirit of God. Some remarks on this important statement of our Lord by Bishop Ryle of Liverpool are helpful. He says the following:

"(a) We must never suppose that the doctrine of this verse takes away man's responsibility and accountableness to God for his soul. On the contrary, the Bible always distinctly declares that if any man is lost, it is his own fault. 'He loses his own soul' (Mark viii:36). If we can not reconcile God's sovereignty and man's responsibility now, we need not doubt that it will be all plain at the last day.

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*We have seen reports of some of these "card-system revivals," in which it was stated that hundreds of these man-made converts joined Romish, Unitarian, Christian Science churches, and even Synagogues. What a farce!

"(b) We must not allow the doctrine of this verse to make us limit or narrow the offer of salvation to sinners. On the contrary, we must hold firmly that pardon and peace are to be offered freely through Christ to every man and woman without exception. We never know who they are that God will draw, and have nothing to do with it. Our duty is to invite all, and leave it to God to choose the vessels of mercy.

"(c) We must not suppose that we, or anybody else, are drawn, unless we come to Christ by faith. This is the grand mark and evidence of any one being the subject of the Father's drawing work. If 'drawn,' he comes to Christ, believes, and loves. Where there is no faith and love, there may be talk, self-conceit, and high profession. But there is no 'drawing' of the Father."

Then the Lord refers to Scripture, when He says "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore who hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me." The words He quotes are found in Isaiah liv:13, and similar words elsewhere, as in Jeremiah xxxi:33-34. Those who come to Christ and are His shall be taught of God; but every man that comes to Christ hath first heard from the Father, and learned, so that all is of God and of sovereign grace. And God hath spoken in His Word and spoken concerning His Son, but no one hath seen the Father except the Son.

Verse 47-59. With another "Verily, verily" the Lord takes up the interrupted teaching as to Himself. In verse 40 He stated that he who believeth on Him should have eternal life, and now He speaks still more positively, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath eternal life." And to this He adds "I am that bread of life." These are blessed words, words of life and words of peace. He the Son of God having come down from heaven, is the object of faith and assures the sinner who believes on Him that he *hath* eternal life. He is that bread of life—not His words, not His doctrines, but He Himself. They had spoken to Him about their fathers eating manna in the wilderness and He tells them the contrast. "Your fathers (not our fathers, as the Apostles wrote later) did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." Their fathers had been unbelieving; they could not enter the promised land; they died in the wilderness, and though they ate the manna it did not save them. Then He speaks of Himself as the bread from heaven, so that man may eat thereof and not die, but have life.

For the third time He mentions Himself as the bread of life, and adds that He is the living bread. Up to this point incarnation is in view; He came as the bread of life from heaven, and if man eats of this bread he shall live and not die. But now He tells us that the bread He gives is His flesh, which He will give for the life of the world. The flesh is His body, and that body He came to offer up in sacrifice on the cross. It is His great sacrificial work, which He now unfolds, when He says "the bread which I will give (not which I have given) is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." He looked forward to the cross, where He would pay the redemption price by which eternal life was purchased for a lost world.

Those who deny the sacrificial work of our Lord, His vicarious suffering and death, must pass by these words. They cannot be explained in any other way. No other explanation is possible. So clear and plain are these words of our Lord that no other meaning can be read into them. The bread which He gives is His flesh, and this, His body, He gives for the life of the world.

It is interesting to read what Dr. Lyman Abbott wrote in 1875 in his exposition of these verses. It is well known that this prominent "religious leader" so-called, denied as an old man, this faith. The words he wrote forty-six years ago condemn him and the rest of the Congregational Unitarians. We quote from his commentary:

"'And the bread which I will give'—note the future tense. He speaks therefore of a gift yet to be perfected by

His passion and death—'is my flesh, which I will give for the sake of the life of the world.' Compare with John iii:16. It seems to me that these enigmatical words are added to guard the Church from falling into the error of supposing that Christ's *doctrine* is the bread of life, and that to hear and believe His words as a Divine teacher is to secure the life eternal of which He speaks. This bread is not merely the teaching nor the example of Christ. The Sacrifice is an essential principle of that spiritual food which He has provided for the world's life." But that is exactly what this man taught later, that the teachings and the example of Christ are to be followed, while the sacrificial death of Christ is denied. What an illustration of the warning given by our Lord in the sermon on the Mount, "If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

When the Jews heard that He spoke of His flesh they at once began to contend one with the other, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" The question reveals once more, as it was in the case of Nicodemus and the woman at the well of Samaria, the darkened heart of the natural man.

He answers by another "Verily, verily." He speaks of eating the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinking His blood, and except they do this they possess not life in them. "He that feedeth on my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink. He that feedeth on my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him." That these words cannot mean the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood in the literal sense of the word is apparent. It is figurative language. Ritualistic Christendom teaches that our Lord means, what is called "the sacrament" of the Lord's supper, that the flesh and the blood mean the bread and wine. But He does no more mean "the Lord's supper" than He meant to teach "Baptism" when He speaks of "born of the water and the Spirit" in the third chapter. The finest refutal of this obnoxious and unscriptual, as well as unreasonable theory, that our Lord meant "the Lord's supper," which has appeared in print, is the one which Bishop Ryle of the

"Church of England" has furnished. It is not out of order to quote it in full, for ritualistic "Protestantism," especially in Great Britain, is again accepting the old Romish heresy.

"(1) To say that our Lord meant the Lord's supper in this text is a most cruel and uncharitable opinion. It cuts off from eternal life all who do not receive the communion. At this rate all who die in infancy and childhood,—all who die of full age without coming to the communion,—the whole body of the Quakers in modern times,—the penitent thief on the cross, all—all are lost for ever in hell! Our Lord's words are stringent and exclusive. Such an opinion is too monstrous to be true. In fact, it was to avoid this painful conclusion that many early Christians, in Cyprian's time, held the doctrine of infant communion.

"(2) To say that our Lord meant the Lord's supper in this text, opens a wide door to formalism and superstition. Thousands would wish nothing better than to hear,—'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood,—that is, eats the sacramental bread and drinks the sacramental wine,—has eternal life.' Here is precisely what the natural heart of man likes! He likes to go to heaven by formally using ordinances. This is the very way in which millions in the Romish Church are making shipwreck of their souls.

"(3) To say that our Lord meant the Lord's supper in the text, is to make a thing absolutely necessary to salvation which Christ never intended to be so. Our Lord commanded us to use the Lord's supper, but He never said that all who did use it would be saved, and all who did not use it would be lost. How many hundreds repent and are converted on their death-beds, far away from ministers and sacraments, and never receive the Lord's supper! And will any one dare to say they are all lost? A new heart and an interest in Christ's cleansing blood are the two things needful to salvation. We must have the Blood and the Spirit, or we have no life in us. Without them no heaven! But the Scripture never puts between a sinner and salvation an outward ordinance, over which the poor sinner may have no control, and may be unable to receive it, without any fault of his own."

But what do His words mean? By flesh and blood, He meant the sacrifice of Himself on the Cross of Calvary. By eating and drinking He meant the act of faith, by which the soul participates in the most blessed and precious results of His substitutionary sacrifice. It is by faith we partake of it. Without it there is no life. In verse 53 He speaks of those who have accepted Him, partaken of His redemption purchased by the shedding of His blood, and therefore have life. In verses 54-56 He speaks of continuing in eating and drinking of Him. The believer must feed on Him. The eternal life we have can only be sustained, nourished and kept by Himself; hence must continue feeding on His dying love. Of this the Apostle speaks in His great confessions: "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians ii:20). Eating and drinking of Him, we become one with Him—"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him."

Verses 60-66. The Lord had finished His great synagogue address. The final word reminded them once more of the great truth He had taught them, and also of the contrast between the manna given in the wilderness, and Himself, the living bread from heaven. "This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever."

And now we have before us the results which followed this wonderful teaching as to eternal life, as given and sustained by His sacrificial death. It is obvious that the "many disciples" who murmured and turned away from Him were not the twelve disciples. These did not murmur, though Judas, who betrayed Him, down in his heart, unbelieving as he was, probably also murmured. The disciples, not a few but many, were those who had followed Him, expecting that He would, as the Messiah, set up His kingdom of power and glory. With their carnal expectations they called themselves "his disciples" and followed in mass. They were of the same stamp as those mentioned in the closing verses of the second chapter. They are those who tried to take Him by force and make Him King (verse 15). Judas, with his covetous heart, followed with carnal expectations, but when it became evident that the Lord would not be King then, to satisfy his lust, he betrayed Him.

They said "This is a hard saying." Hard, they meant, because it shattered their hopes; hard because it was repellent. They did not believe what He said as to the need of receiving eternal life; they were stumbled by His declaration that this life can only be received and nourished by eating and drinking of Him. Instead of bowing to His teaching, and they had followed Him as a teacher, they refused to accept it. It was so contrary to their natural opinions and carnal hope. And our Lord, the omniscient One, knew in Himself all about their thoughts and murmurings. He did not need to listen to their excited utterances amongst themselves for "He knew what was in man."

If they were offended at His teaching, what would they say, if finally they should see the Son of Man ascending into heaven, where He was before He came to earth? This is an important statement which we must not lightly pass over. They had murmured when He declared that He came down from heaven. Then they had murmured when He spoke about eating His flesh. And now He speaks of the same body which He had taken on in incarnation as Son of Man, the same body which He would give for the life of the world on the cross. And in this body, as Son of Man, He would in time ascend into heaven. This anticipates both His physical resurrection, and His bodily ascension into glory. It answers the deniers of a physical resurrection and a physical ascension of our Lord. The body the Son of God took on in incarnation, that prepared body, called into existence by a creative act of the Holy Spirit, the body which hung on the cross, which died and was buried—that same body is now at the right hand of God. He is there as the glorified Son of Man, and in that body He will some day return to earth. Nor must we overlook the strong testimony our Lord bears once more as to His Deity. He declares that the place where He goes after His passion is the place where He was before. No Unitarian, Russellite nor others can explain this word of our Lord, for it is His unanswerable testimony as to His pre-existence.

When next our Lord says "it is the Spirit that quickeneth" He means the Holy Spirit. Inasmuch as His words are spiritual, the Spirit of God uses them to quicken the spiritually dead and thus He gives life. The flesh profiteth nothing. Much has been written on these statements of our Lord which is incorrect. That He means the Holy Spirit, and His work in imparting the eternal life to the believer, is in full harmony with the rest of the teachings of our Lord in this Gospel. Eternal Life and the Holy Spirit cannot be separated.

And while He spoke He read every heart. He knew that some believed not; as He looked upon the twelve, He knew that Judas would soon betray Him. But their unbelief, rejecting Him and His words, was but a confirmation of the words He had spoken before unto them, that "no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of my Father." And this was more than a confirmation, it was His comfort and His joy, as they turned away from Him, and no longer followed Him, that all whom the Father had given to Him would come to Him and be His own.

Verses 67-71. They are all gone. What a scene it must have been, as they left with murmuring lips that synagogue in Capernaum, and then formed, probably, their groups to continue their heated discussion outside. He is alone with the twelve. What loving look He must have given them as He asked "Will ye also go away?" He knew, of course, what they would do; for His own information He needed not to ask the question. But His loving heart yearned even then for an expression of their trust in Him. And Peter answered for the rest. His impulsive nature, so sympathetic and aggressive, bursts forth in the blessed question, which thousands upon thousands of the Saints of God have repeated—"To whom shall we go?" He expressed thus in deepest feeling his conviction that if they left Him too, there would not be another One like Him to go to. To know Him, to believe on Him, to trust Him, to follow Him, to walk in His fellowship is the most blessed experience of human life. And if Christ were given up to whom can the hungry soul of man go to find its need supplied? There are many who offer something apart from Christ. But "there is none but Christ that satisfies." There is nothing in the wide world which satisfies, but Christ only.

Once more we quote Dr. Lyman Abbott's words. He says in his comment on Peter's question—"To go away from Christ is to go out even here into the darkness; unto loneliness, hopelessness, despair." How unspeakably sad it is! The man who wrote these words which ring true has gone away from Christ and "gone out even here into the darkness," for in the closing pages of his autobiography he bears witness to this fact.

Peter's confession which follows his question is twofold. First a confession that He has words of eternal life, and then the confession of His person, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." No other lips had ever spoken of eternal life as the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ did. Peter, believing on Him, had believed His words and he knew that eternal life, of which the Lord had spoken. Then follows the noble confession of his faith in Him as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. But while Peter was the spokesman for the twelve, the Lord knew that in the little company there was one who was a devil. He spoke of Judas Iscariot. He had chosen him, as He had chosen the others. But this does not mean "unto salvation." Some have argued that the betrayer of our Lord was also a gift of the Father to the Son, and that the Lord Jesus chose him for salvation. Those who give this view argue "that Christ's selecting, and the Father's giving and drawing, do not exclude final falling away." If this were true there would be an irreconcilable clash between the Lord's actions and His words, for later He teaches that His sheep, those given to Him by the Father, shall in no wise perish.

The choosing of Judas means that the Lord had chosen him for the office of an apostle. He had selected him for that office, knowing at the same time that this man would do the work which the prophetic Word in the Old Testament had foreseen and announced. Judas never was a true disciple; he had never believed on Jesus as Peter believed, "the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Lord called him "a devil," for he was an unsaved man, and as such linked with the author of sin and death.

CHAPTER VII

Verses 1-9. It must be remembered that the ministry of our Lord as reported by John is confined to Jerusalem and Judea, with the exception of the first, second, fourth and sixth chapters. After the events recorded in the previous chapter the Lord left Judea and for months labored in Galilee. The omniscient One knew all the plottings of the leaders of the Jews, how they hated Him, and were in council to do away with Him. Not alone did He know all this, but He also knew the exact time, when and under what circumstances, His passion should begin. The time was not yet and therefore He withdrew from Judea. The Passover feast, which comes in the spring, was past; the feast of Pentecost, the feast of weeks, which comes after Passover, is not mentioned here. He did not go to Jerusalem for that feast. It is a significant fact that the feast of Pentecost is nowhere mentioned in the Gospels. That feast is mentioned only in the Book of Acts, and once in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, when Paul wrote of being in Ephesus at Pentecost.

The law commanded that every male Jew should attend every year the three great feasts in Jerusalem, Passover, Pentecost and the feast of Tabernacles. Our Lord according to the Gospel records went to Jerusalem for Passover and for the feast of Tabernacles, but not once is it said that He attended the feast of Pentecost. These feasts have a great typical and prophetic meaning. The Passover stands for the Cross, and the blessed work the Lamb of God finished there; Pentecost is typical of the coming of the Holy Spirit for this dispensation, for the outgathering of the Church, and the feast of Tabernacles proclaims the blessed and glorious consummation when Christ comes again to bless His people and set up His Kingdom.

The summer months were then spent by our Lord in Galilee; He was absent from Jerusalem, but came back when the feast of Tabernacles was about to be celebrated. It foreshadows the character of the present dispensation which began with Pentecost. During this dispensation the Lord is not here in person, but when this age closes He is coming again to reveal Himself, to manifest His glory in Jerusalem, and then the feast of Tabernacles will have its blessed fulfillment. The Lord therefore never appeared in Jerusalem during the feast of Pentecost.

His brethren in Galilee urged Him to depart at once for Jerusalem and show Himself in public. Much has been written on the question of the brethren of our Lord. Some say that they were the offspring of Mary by Joseph after the birth of our Lord. In the early Church two opinions were held regarding the relationship of those who are termed "the Brethren of the Lord." Some maintained that no blood relationship existed, that these brethren were the sons of Joseph by a former wife, before he espoused the Virgin, and that they are called His brethren only in the same way in which Joseph is called His father. On the other hand others maintained that they were the Lord's brethren as truly as the Virgin Mary was the Lord's mother, being her sons by her husband Joseph. During the end of the fourth century Jerome advanced another theory. In answer to one Helvidius, who had attacked the prevailing view of the superiority of a Virgin over a married person, and laid great stress on the fact that Mary had other children from her husband, Jerome declared that the Lord's brethren were His cousins. We do not think that this question can be definitely settled; nor is it of any importance. They were blood relations of some kind. The text shows that they did not believe on Him. They questioned His Messiahship and urged Him, perhaps sarcastically, to come to the front and demonstrate before the gathered multitudes in Jerusalem that He is the promised King—Messiah. From the first chapter of Acts we learn that they were converted afterward, for they are among the waiting company in Jerusalem (Acts i:14).

He answers them calmly. His time was not yet come. Their time was always. They had nothing to fear from the side of the Jews and the world would not hate them, for being unconverted, they were still of the world. It was otherwise with Him. He was not of the world and His testimony He bore about the world was that its works are evil, that is why He was hated. Well has it been said "the wickedness of human nature is painfully shown in this sentence, 'The Lord Jesus was hated'—it is an utter delusion to suppose that there is an innate response to perfect moral purity, or an innate admiration of the true, the pure, the just, the kind, and the good in the heart of man. God gave 1900 years ago, a perfect pattern of purity, truth and love in the person of our Lord, and man's response was 'hatred.' Nor has the human heart changed since. If our Lord were to come again in humiliation the world today would hate Him, as they hated Him then. If Christians live true Christian lives, walking even as He walked, testifying against evil, if their lives are a constant testimony against the world, then the hatred of the world will be their portion. Thus He prayed: 'The world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' How little of all this is known to Christians today! The great professing church seeks the favor and applause of the world and makes common cause with the world which lieth in the wicked one. Let a believer live in separation from the world and its ways and he will soon find out that he is hated by the world, including what has been called 'the religious world.' Erasmus used to say that Luther might have had an easy life, if he had not touched the Pope's crown, and the monks' bellies.

"Let us note, that unpopularity among men is no proof that a Christian is wrong, either in faith or practice. The common notion of many, that it is a good sign of a person's character to be well-spoken of by everybody, is a great error. When we see how our Lord was regarded by the wicked and worldly of His day, we may well conclude that it is a very poor compliment to be told that we are liked by everybody. There can surely be very little 'witness' about our lives if even the wicked like us. 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you' (Luke vi:26). That sentence is too much forgotten."*

He refused to accompany them. And while they journeyed towards Jerusalem He abode in Galilee, awaiting the time of His departure.

Verses 10-13. His relations had gone, probably disappointed at His refusal to join them. He did not want to attract attention, nor give an occasion to repeat what had been attempted before, "to make Him King" (vi:15) and so He went not openly, joining a larger company, but as in secret. The Jews, the rulers and the Pharisees, were on the lookout for Him, expecting that He would appear at the feast. They asked "Where is *He*?" More literally translated this question is "Where is that man?" It implies contempt. Not alone did the Jewish leaders expect Him and look for Him, to vent their hatred upon Him, but the mass of people also expected Him and had Him in their thoughts. How could it be otherwise? The healing of the impotent man and the great message the Lord had delivered in connection with the miracle was still vivid in their minds. The miracle of the feeding of the multitudes was also known to them. Probably there were hundreds of those who had been fed in Jerusalem, as the requirement was that every Jew should participate in the great feast of Tabernacles. They must have scattered the news of what had taken place in Galilee and what He had said as to Himself being the Bread of Life come down from heaven. The gathered masses were divided as to Himself. Some proclaimed Him to be a good man; but others, and they were most likely the larger class, denied that He was a good man, and branded Him as a deceiver. But there were no voices heard which spoke of Him as the Messiah, the King of Israel. Those who believed in Him as a good man were afraid to declare themselves for fear of the leaders.

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*Notes on John.

Verses 14-20. The feast of Tabernacles lasted for seven days and was, and still is (among orthodox Jews), an occasion of great rejoicing. Booths of tree branches were made, commemorating the dwelling in booths when their fathers left Egypt. The law commanded great sacrifices (Numbers xxix:12-34) to be brought throughout these seven days. It followed immediately after the feast of the blowing of the Trumpets (foreshadowing the future regathering of Israel) and the great Day of Atonement (typical of Israel's spiritual restoration and the forgiveness of their sins), and, as already stated, the feast of Tabernacles is typical of our Lord's Return and the blessed results of peace and joy which will follow that coming great event. When the feast was in full swing, in the middle of the week, He appeared in their midst. He went at once up into the Temple to teach. The portion of the Temple where teaching was permitted was the outer Court. Over twenty years before the boy Jesus was in the same outer Court, sitting in the midst of the teachers, hearing them and asking questions. We wonder if some of the older teachers and doctors of the law remembered that boy.

It has not pleased the Holy Spirit to record what our Lord taught when He entered the Temple. But we know that it was wonderful, for the Jews marveled. Where did He receive all His knowledge? Did He ever attend a great school of learning? Did He sit at the feet of some great Gamaliel? Had He conformed to the demands of rabbinical custom, that anyone who appears as teacher must have been for a number of years the companion of a learned rabbi? And furthermore did He not come from Nazareth? Was He not brought up in that town of ill-repute on account of its uncultured and ignorant population? What good thing can come out of Nazareth? "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

He answered their question. What He taught He had not learned of others; nor was it something which He had brought forth out of His own mind. The Father had taught Him and therefore He spoke these things (Chapter viii:28). The doctrine He taught was not of Himself, but of another, even of Him that sent Him into the world, the Father with Whom He is one, and apart from Whom He does nothing. The great truth He uttered in the fifth chapter is here once more put before them. It is again mentioned by Him in the twelfth chapter: "I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me; He gave Me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (xii:49). All then which came from His blessed lips is the revelation of God. But He gives them a test. They also may know whether His doctrine is of God or that He speaks from Himself. If anyone is willing to do His will, that one shall find the truth.

"They would know this, if they were but willing to do the

Father's will, for the spirit of obedience clears out the earth-vapors that obscure the heavens; he who has not heart-felt desire for the truth will scarcely learn it. This is itself simple, if only we believe that God can certify the truth to His creatures, and that He cares enough for them to desire that they should have it. But, simple as it is, if we believe it, what does it reveal with regard to the condition, not of the world merely, but of the children of God today? The various and conflicting views of Christians as to almost every Christian truth, how are they to be accounted for, with the Bible open before us, and the Spirit of Truth to lead us into all truth? What heart searching should it not give us, to learn how far we are really willing to have the truth—the whole truth, at whatever cost."*

He gives another test. The man who speaks from himself always seeks his own glory; speaking *from* himself, he speaks *for* himself and tries to advance his own interests. This is the mark of all teachers of error, who speak not according to the truth of God and through the guidance of the Spirit of God, but from themselves. But the statement "He that seeketh the glory of Him that sent Him, He is true and no unrighteousness is in Him" can only be fully true in Him Whom the Father sent, our Lord. Yet every servant of God, who seeks the glory of God and not his own glory, will be kept from that which is untrue and unrighteous.

But they rejected Him and the doctrine which the Father had given Him to proclaim, yet were they boasting of the law given by Moses. "Did not Moses give you the Law?" From Deuteronomy xxxi:10, we learn every seventh year the Law was to be read publicly during the feast of Tabernacles. It is quite possible that it was a seventh year feast which the Lord attended, and if this is the case the statement as to the Law has additional meaning. But with all their boasting in the law they did not keep, little did they know that the omniscient, holy Lawgiver stood in their presence. They were going about to kill Him and thus breaking that Law. Not the rulers and the Pharisees answered Him, but the people, those who did not believe on Him as a good man, but thought Him a deceiver. They were ignorant of the secret plottings of the religious leaders. Not knowing the truth they charged Him with having a demon. Thus they treated Him who is the Light and the Life.

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*Numerical Bible.

Verses 21-24. From these words spoken by our ominiscient Lord it becomes apparent that the great miracle performed by Him at the pool of Bethesda was the real cause of their hatred. They had not forgotten the healing of the impotent man. They persecuted Him then and sought to slay Him because He healed the man on the Sabbath. They had nourished the same feeling against Him ever since. He reminds them of circumcision given by Moses, yet it was not appointed by Moses, for circumcision was prior to the law, given unto the fathers. The law commanded that the Sabbath should be kept holy and no work to be done in it; but the law also demanded that every male child should be circumcised on the eighth day. The eighth day many times fell on the Sabbath, and that the law of Moses might not be broken, the child was circumcised on the Sabbath. He showed them thereby that they did a certain work on the Sabbath, a religious ordinance made necessary by the commandment of God. But what is circumcision in comparison with the great work He had done, a work which glorifies God and made a man perfectly whole! Why should they be angry with Him because He had healed the man on the Sabbath? They had judged Him hastily; they condemned Him because they were blind ritualists, standing and defending the letter of the law. Their lips were silenced. They could not give Him an answer.

Verses 25-27. Jerusalem was crowded with people on account of the feast, and those who speak now were not visitors but natives of Jerusalem. In a preceding verse the people said: "Who goeth about to kill thee?" (verse 21). These inhabitants of Jerusalem were better informed; they knew something of the hatred, and of the plans which were being made against Him. "Is not this He, whom they seek to kill?" They were astonished that He spoke openly in the way He did. None of the Elders or Priests said anything to Him. They did not open their mouths to denounce Him, nor did they lay hands on Him. They could not explain the inactiveness of their rulers, when they had such a good opportunity to arrest Him. Some even thought that their leaders had changed their minds about Him. "Have the rulers indeed acknowledged that this is Christ?"

Mockery and sneers followed. They thought they knew where He came from. They knew Him by the name "Jesus of Nazareth." These proud Jerusalem Jews said, "He is nothing but a Galilean, from that little town of Nazareth." And later, when He rode into Jerusalem, the people said: "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth." Then it was written over His cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." They knew this much, that the Messiah must come from Bethlehem. But this man, they said, is a Nazarene, brought up as a carpenter in Nazareth. They did not know of His virgin birth, nor that He was born in the city of David, Bethlehem. They manifested their ignorance by their statement: "As to Christ, when He comes, no one knows whence He is." Perhaps back of this strange question lie some of the foolish traditions and sayings of the Jews, which even then, at least in part, were circulating among the people.

Verses 28-32. This is one of the few passages in the Gospels in which it is recorded that He cried, which means that He spoke with a loud voice. The Prophet Isaiah had announced, "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear His voice in the street" (Isa. xlii:2). This was His lovely and meek character, yet at times He spoke with a loud voice. Once more in this chapter He cried (verse37); also in chapter xii:44. Then He cried with a loud voice on the cross (Matt. xxvii:46) and also when He yielded up His spirit.

"Ye both know Me and ye know whence I am." This was His utterance. He acknowledged they were right in saying that they knew Him, yet they knew Him not in the real sense of the word. They knew He was from Nazareth; they knew about His relatives, those called "his brethren"; they knew that He had lived for thirty years and over in Nazareth; yet of His miraculous birth, of His Deity they knew nothing whatever. That is what He affirms: "But He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not. But I know Him because I am from Him, and He hath sent Me." Brief, yet weighty words these are. Once more the Lord bears witness as to His Deity and Oneness with the Father. He is the sent One of God; He is from Him; He knows Him. He was always with Him, one with Him, equal with Him. They understood at once what He meant. His former words when He had healed the impotent man must have been remembered by some: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (verse 17). They were then ready to kill Him. And here He had made statements of the same character. Their antagonism was raised to the highest pitch, and they sought to take Him, but they were divinely restrained from laying hands on Him. No hand could touch Him, for His hour had not yet come. That hour when He was to be delivered into the hands of men, to be crucified and to finish the work He came to do, was scheduled from all eternity. The exact hour was known and appointed before the foundation of the world.* When His enemies finally laid hold on Him, it was because His hour had come.

Another effect of the words of our Lord was that many believed on Him. They probably believed in the same way as those mentioned at the close of the second chapter. They may have been Galileans, for they said: "When Christ cometh, will He do more signs than these which this man has done?" But few signs and miracles had been done by Him in Jerusalem, but His great signs had been wrought in Galilee. They seemed to be convinced that He was the Messiah, but we hear nothing of them that confessed Him as Lord and as Christ, nor did they follow Him. The Pharisees soon discovered that He whom they hated was the most talked of person at the feast. Everybody spoke of Him, and when they found that many voices were heard that He must be the Messiah, they thought the time for action had come. They therefore commissioned officers to arrest Him.

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*In a certain Bible Study Magazine we saw recently the statement that our Lord died "*a premature death.*" We suppose the author of the article from which we quote this, which also contains other dishonoring statements about our Lord, means that He might have lived longer. It is foolish for any one to write such inventions. Think of Christ dying a premature death, when a certain hour for His death on the Cross was known in all eternity!

Verses 33-36. Surrounded by the multitudes, with the officers of the Pharisees approaching to carry out the command of the chiefs of the people, the Lord addresses them. The officers were not only powerless to do what they had been told, but they were forced to listen to His words. Later we find what they said to their superiors about what they had heard from His lips.

They had come to lay hold on Him. His words tell them that it could not be done, for yet a little while He was to be with them, and when that little while is gone He would go back to the Father who sent Him. He speaks in full assurance, in perfect knowledge of what would take place. He would accomplish the great work and then go back to Him, the Father. And after He is gone, He said, "Ye shall seek Me and not find Me." This is a prophetic utterance of our Lord; it goes beyond the people who listened to Him at that time. It concerns the nation itself, that after He had gone back to the Father, they would look in vain for the promised Messiah. They would then seek Him and not find Him. Still more solemn is the next sentence, "Where I am ye cannot come." Let us notice that our Lord does not say, "Where I am going ye cannot come," but "Where *I am*." The place He speaks of is heaven; this is the place which is His, and even while He was on earth in creature's form in His Deity He was in heaven, and did not cease from being there when He walked on earth (see John iii:13). Well may we confess, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me." And those who reject Him, who do not believe on Him, can NEVER be in the place where He is. This one sentence answers all the unscriptural inventions of a second chance for those who rejected Christ and died unsaved, it is a complete refutation of the "larger hope" and the cunningly devised fables of "reconciliationism," the misapplication of the Scriptural term "the restitution of all things." It is an utter impossibility that those who die in their sins and in unbelief can ever reach the place where He is. Men may please themselves with thinking it is kind and loving and liberal and large hearted to believe and to teach that all men and women of all sorts will finally be found in heaven. One word of our Lord Jesus Christ's overturns the whole theory: Heaven is a place, He says to the wicked, where "ye cannot come."

They understood not what He said. They imagined that He thought of going to those Jews who were dispersed among the Greeks and then also teach the Gentiles. They surmised something which came true after His death, resurrection and ascension. The Holy Spirit came down from heaven, and the witness was first given in Jerusalem. Once more the kingdom promise is preached. They rejected the message, and then the Gospel was sent far hence unto the Gentiles.

Verses 37-39. The feast of Tabernacles terminated with the eighth day. It was on this last day, that the voice of our Lord was heard uttering this most blessed invitation and promise. For seven days water had been drawn from the brook Siloam and poured out, under the rejoicing of the people assembled to keep the feast. It was a memorial of the miracle in their history, when the Lord, during their wilderness experience, supplied water out of the cleft of the rock. But more than that, for the well informed Israelite, who believed the promises of God made to the nation, it was prophetic. Zechariah's final vision tells of the time "when living waters shall go out from Jerusalem" (Zech. xiv:8). Ezekiel, too, had beheld the waters like a mighty river flowing forth from the great temple. And in the distant past Balaam, likewise, had spoken a similar prophecy (Num. xxiv:7). All these prophecies will be fulfilled in the day the King comes back to be in the midst of His people. The last great day of the feast was called "the Hosanna Rabba," when the air was fairly rent with the Hosannas of the multitudes. But on the eighth day the ceremony of pouring out water ceased. It was symbolical of the fact that after the wilderness wanderings were over they entered the promised land, where the springs of water supplied all their need to the full.

And here their own King-Messiah is with them. He through whom all these promises can only be fulfilled, He who is the rock which followed them (1 Cor. x:4) is in their midst. He is the rejected One. The hour nears when He will be cast out and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles to be lifted up on the cross. All that the feast of

Tabernacles signifies prophetically cannot be now; it cannot be fulfilled, "rivers of living water" flowing forth from Jerusalem. In this last day, when the feast was about ended, He stood and uttered these wonderful words: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink"; and then the promise, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, from his belly shall flow forth rivers of living water." While the national promise is impossible, on account of His rejection, He offers something new, giving an individual invitation, and an individual promise. He is the fountain of living water and He invites the thirsting one to come to Him and drink. Then having come to Him to drink, believing on Him, He gives the great promise, from that one should flow forth rivers of living water. We are told in the next verse that this means the gift of the Holy Ghost, which all those receive who believe on Him. Yet this gift was conditioned on the death of Christ and the resurrection and ascension of Christ; the words "for Jesus was not yet glorified" include all these great events in the redemption work of our Lord.

The promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Christ was glorified and the Glorifier of Christ, the Holy Spirit came down from heaven to earth. He came to dwell in and to fill those who have come to Christ and believed on Him. And so it was on that memorable day when the promised gift was given. Ever since, whosoever believes on Him shares in that gift and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. And that Spirit is to manifest Himself through the believer as streams of living water, flowing forth from Him. It does not mean that there is to be a supernatural manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in some startling sign—gifts, such as the "gift of Tongues," the lowest of all the gifts, but that the believer is to be the source from which blessings flow forth to others by bearing witness to Christ.*

Noteworthy is Martin Luther's vigorous and simple paraphrase on these words of our Lord. "He that cometh to Me shall be so furnished with the Holy Spirit, that he shall not only be quickened and refreshed himself and delivered from thirst, but he shall also be a strong stone vessel, from which the Holy Spirit with all blessing shall flow to others, refreshing, comforting and strengthening them, even as he was refreshed by Me. Peter on the day of Pentecost, by one sermon, as by a rush of water, delivered three thousand from the devil's kingdom." An old comment says: "When a man turns to the Lord, he is like a fountain filled with living water, and rivers flow from him to men of all nations and tribes." Even so it is. God's people are not called to be stagnant pools, or reservoirs which only receive and never give forth, but our calling is to be rivers, which constantly give because they have in themselves the fountain of living water.

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*"The possession of the gifts of the Spirit, it is evident, in the early church is quite compatible with an ungodly heart. A man or a woman might speak with tongues, and yet be like salt that has lost its savour. The possession of the fullness of the graces of the Spirit, on the contrary, was that which made any man a blessing in the world."

"But where else shall we find so wonderful a picture of what the man indwelt of the Spirit is in the world, as witness of the glory of His rejected Lord? As we have to say of kindred utterances in this Gospel, it seems too highly drawn for a picture of any save the rare exceptions among Christian men. But let us accept the reproof of this, and try rather to realize what a man indwelt of the Spirit would be normally as that. The Spirit of God—God dwelling within one—the Living Center of the practical life; the Enlightener of mind and conscience; the Energy of the affection and the will: all power, all wisdom in Him who as Vice-regent of Christ has come to hold me for Christ against all that in a world opposed to Him would hinder my witness!—what competency, what fulness at all times accessible to me does all this imply!

"A perpetual spring in a vessel must needs overflow the vessel in which it is, the smallness of which is no limit to the spring itself. When once the vessel is full, all the power of the spring will manifest itself in the overflow. Hence, (*if we think of the spring and not of the vessel*), 'rivers of living water' are not too much to predicate of the outflow from this divine Source of blessing within the soul, which, first filling to complete satisfaction the soul itself, must surely then flow out for the need of others.

"This is the Lord's own witness to the gift He gives, who cannot err in the estimate He makes of it. When we realize what it is, we cannot think it to be too high. Our experimental knowledge will depend indeed upon our practical subjection to the Spirit indwelling us; but how blessed to know that this is to be gained in so simple a way, and that this is the picture the Lord can give us of the normal Christian."*

Verses 40-44. Evidently the attention was arrested. To see this One standing up, and telling out such a message, must have astonished the multitude. We doubt not there were thirsty souls there, sin-laden souls, souls to whom these words went home. They thought that He must be the Prophet, the one whom Moses had announced would come some day (Deut. xviii:15-18). But there were others and they seemed to be convinced that "this is the Christ"; they saw in Him, as He really was, the promised Messiah, the King, the Son of David. They were probably saying this one to another, so that others heard of it. Therefore some made objection. They knew Messiah could not come out of Galilee; they thought our Lord was nothing but a Galilean, and therefore He could not be the Messiah. They knew that Messiah must be a Son of David and come from the city of David, Bethlehem; and they knew not that He was the Son of David from Bethlehem. The result was a division among the people. Some said He is the Prophet, some He is Christ, others objected and still others hated and despised Him. And so it is still, there is "a division among the people on account of Him." Some day the burning question, "What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?" will be forever settled for Jew and Gentile, and that will be the day of His coming Glory.

Verses 45-53. These officers had been sent several days before (verse 32) to arrest our Lord. They probably watched Him very closely and looked for a convenient time to carry out their commission. They could not do so, because His hour was not yet come. Here they return empty handed and when asked why they did not bring Him a prisoner, their defense is, "Never spake man like this man." It was not cowardice on their part, that, fearing the great mass of people, they refrained from touching His person. The power and beauty of the words of the Son of God restrained them completely from taking action. They listened to Him and then forgot all about the orders they had received. Often has this been repeated in the lives of evangelists and missionaries who preached faithfully the Word of God and did not know that wicked men were plotting to do them harm; the Word preached touched their consciences, and they were unable to carry out their threats.

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*Numerical Bible.

"Are ye also deceived?" said the Pharisees to them. "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him?" "Who are ye, hirelings of the Sanhedrim that you should be captivated by His words? We, the rulers and the Pharisees, we, the learned doctors of law, men of authority, are the judges. This miserable mob which shouts out that He must be the Prophet, and others saying He must be Christ, know not the law; they are cursed." Perhaps they meant with this that they had sympathy with Him, whom they considered a law-breaker, because He had healed on the Sabbath, and therefore, the multitude also not knowing the law, were cursed. Everything shows that the Pharisees were beside themselves, filled with rage, with envy, hatred and malice against the Lord.

But suddenly one of their own number speaks; it is Nicodemus. The Holy Spirit adds, so that there might be no question as to who this Nicodemus is, "he that came to Jesus by night." As we know from the third chapter, Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler and the teacher in Israel. That he speaks now in the presence of his associates, members of the Sanhedrim, shows that the blessed words our Lord had spoken to this man in that memorable night had not been spoken in vain; they had touched his heart. He ventures, though weakly, to defend the Lord. "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" He appealed to the law (Deut. i:17, xvii:8, xix:15). They knew the law well, and also the instructions by the elders which required that every accused person should have a hearing, with an opportunity to confront the witnesses against him and to cross-examine them. They felt the rebuke and could not answer; instead they sneered at their colleague, "Art thou also of Galilee?" which meant, are you also ignorant, thou, our great teacher, the honored and respected Nicodemus? Then sarcastically, "Search and look, out of Galilee hath arisen no prophet." Their fury and malicious bitterness had blinded them completely. They quite forgot that Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Jonah and probably Nahum were Galilean prophets. Then they dispersed.

CHAPTER VIII

Verses 1-11. This passage has been rejected by some as an interpolation. The chief arguments against it are the following: It is not found in some of the oldest manuscripts and earlier translations; that some of the Greek fathers never refer to it; that it differs in style from the rest of this Gospel; that the incident would foster immorality. All these arguments have been proven invalid. Some of the most reliable manuscripts contain this paragraph, and in others it was omitted on purpose, because the grace, which shines forth so marvelously in the Lord's dealing with this woman, was unpalatable to those teachers who leaned towards legality. It seems the fear that it might lead to license seems to have influenced a good many in the early Church to discountenance this blessed story. Augustinus in one of his works refers to this. In speaking of the case of a wife who has committed adultery, he says, how well it becomes a Christian husband to be reconciled to her, upon her repentance, because our Lord said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." This, however, rather shocks the minds of some weak believers, or rather unbelievers and enemies of the Christian faith, insomuch that, afraid of its giving their wives impunity in sinning, they struck out of their copies of the Gospel this that our Lord did in pardoning the woman taken in adultery; as if He granted leave of sinning, when He said, "Go, and sin no more."

It is evident from the text that this story belongs here and must be genuine. If we leave it out the text would make no sense, for in verse 53 of the previous chapter we read: "Every man went to his own house." If we leave out the first eleven verses of this chapter, the next verse, verse 12, "Then spake Jesus again unto them," makes no connection whatever. But from the beginning of chapter viii we learn that our Lord, having spent the night on Olivet, returned early to the temple and was surrounded at once by the people who still lingered in Jerusalem after the feast of Tabernacles. Then He sat down and resumed His teaching. But before He could do so His enemies were once more active. In the previous chapter they had failed to take Him by force. The officers had returned without Him, for His hour had not yet come. Their attempt is now to ensnare Him so as to find occasion to accuse Him of some inconsistency.

The woman who had just been apprehended in adultery is brought into His presence. They form a circle about Him and put the woman alongside of the Lord, thus putting the Holy One of Israel alongside of one of His sinful, lost creatures, for whom He had come to die. We do not know who this woman was, as her name and history are not given. They state the case against her. She was taken in adultery. The Law of Moses demanded that she suffer the death penalty by stoning (Lev. xx:10, Deuteronomy xxii:22). They demand "What therefore sayest thou?" There is no difficulty in finding out why they put this question to Him. In their cunning they thought He must answer that the law of Moses must be upheld and the sentence executed. If he had answered thus they would have gone at once to the Roman authorities and accused Him as some kind of a rebel against the orders of the Government, for it was not lawful for the Jews to put anyone to death (xviii:31). If He would answer negatively, that the woman should not be stoned, they would have made coin out of this, and quickly passed the word that He was a lawbreaker, one who upheld unrighteousness and sin.

And while they plotted and concocted this scheme to harm Him, He knew their thoughts. Nothing was hid from His omniscient eye. While they waited for a reply, He stooped down and wrote with His finger on the ground. It is the only passage in the Gospels which tells us that our Lord wrote. What did He trace on the ground? No one knows, for there is nothing said about it by John. But let us remember the same finger which wrote in the dust is the finger which wrote the law—He is the lawgiver; that law pronounces death, it is written in the dust, the dust of death. Not a word came from His lips. But the questioners were persistent and determined to get an answer. "Then He lifted up Himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground." His perfect wisdom is once more revealed. He was not the one to sit in judgment and pronounce the sentence. The witnesses according to the law were to be the executioners of the sentence of the law. They had come bringing the charge. Were they guiltless, or had they also broken the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? If there was one in that company who had not sinned in this line, he might come to the front and cast the first stone at the woman. They all sneaked out. The eldest left first; they were convicted by their own conscience. If they were guilty of the same sin which the woman had committed, then they were under the same sentence of death for the same sin. He who spoke to them knew their lives and sin. What a testimony this is to the moral condition of the Jewish people in the days of our Lord! These Scribes and Pharisees with their high profession and pretensions were guilty of grossest sin.

They had all gone away. The accusers were gone, the accused woman remained face to face with Him, who knew no sin, in whose mouth no guile was found. "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord." How delicately and graciously He treated the poor woman! He might have asked her about her sin and guilt. He might have rebuked her. But none of all this came from His blessed lips. He did not need to ask her about her guilt. He knew her life's history, as He knows ours. And the woman addressed Him as "Lord," which is evidence that she believed in Him. She expressed her faith in Him, uttering this one word "Lord," the word a disciple of our Lord, Judas Iscariot never used. And because she believed in Him as Lord, He said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." He revealed His grace unto her, but that grace demands holiness. Forgiveness must be followed by the new life.

Verses 12-20. The incident of the woman brought before the Lord was an interruption. He had returned in the early morning to the temple to teach. Probably the sun was just beginning to shine, when looking towards the sunrise He made this great statement, "I am the light of the world." It is another great self-witness. He is the light, already so blessedly announced in the first chapter of the Gospel. This means He is the light and gives light; apart from Him all is darkness, but in His light we see the light. He is the light of the world, it is to reach the Gentiles. This is especially revealed in Isaiah (Chapter xlix). After the complaint of Messiah, prophetically stated, and as relating to Israel, "I have laboured in vain"—the rejected One is announced as the light for the Gentiles—"I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Isaiah xlix:1-6). And he that followeth Him, He assures us, shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life. Following necessitates believing on Him, for none can follow Him as the light, unless there is faith in Him. "What the teacher is to the scholar, the master to the servant, the guide to the traveler, the general to the soldier, the shepherd to the sheep, that is Christ to the believer who follows Him."

Following Him is walking in the light and not in darkness. Man on account of sin is in moral and spiritual darkness. Believing on Christ and following Him delivers from both. In his fellowship the believer is delivered from the power of darkness, from the power of sin and from ignorance as to spiritual things. No prophet ever made such an assertion as this, and only He could make it because He is Lord and God, the Life and the Light.

Then the Pharisees answered Him, "Thou bearest record of Thyself, thy record is not true." Because He spoke thus of Himself, they branded His self-witness as untrustworthy. Their objection was another evidence of the darkened mind of the natural man, as well as the hatred of their hearts. The Lord answers at once, that though He bore record of Himself, yet His testimony concerning Himself is true. How abundantly this has been confirmed in the experiences of believing sinners in every generation, men and women uncountable, who believed on Him, followed Him, and rejoiced in the light of life, walking in the light as He is in the light. But He added "for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come and whither I go." He knew who He was, the Son of God, the Lord of glory. He knew the great work He came to do in redemption, and He knew that He would return to the glory from which He came. Of this they were ignorant, or else they would not have charged Him with bearing an untrustworthy testimony, but would have worshipped at His feet. They judged only after the outward appearance, but He did not judge man in this manner. He did not come to judge the world, yet the day will come when He will execute the judgments committed into His hands by the Father. When that judgment time comes, His judgment will be true; for in it He is not alone—"For I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me." Here once more the great testimony of John's Gospel, the inseparable union of the Father and the Son, is in evidence.

In the law it is written "that the testimony of two men is true" (Deuteronomy xvii:6; xix:15). There were two witnesses as to Himself and His mission; He bore witness of Himself and the Father also witnessed concerning Him, for He had sent Him. Then His enemies wanted to know about His Father, "Where is Thy Father?" In asking this question they showed contempt, as if saying, "Where then is this father of yours? Why does he not show himself and tell us all about you?"

Then the Lord answered and said, "Ye neither know Me, nor My Father; if ye had known Me, ye should have known my Father also." These are weighty words again. Not only do they show once more the unity of the Son with the Father, but they teach us that knowledge of the Father is only possible through the Son. Not knowing Christ means not knowing the Father. But knowing Christ, believing on Him, following Him, gives the knowledge of the Father, and as believers know Christ better, they learn to know the Father more and more. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same has not the Father" (1 John ii:23). "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God" (John iv:15). "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v:12).

All this took place in the temple, in that portion called the treasury. Boldly He had declared His Messiahship and His Oneness with God. But no one laid hands on Him, not for fear of the multitudes, many of whom sided with Him, but because His hour was not yet come.*

Verses 21-27. These words were spoken by the Lord probably some time later on the same day, but not in the same place, "in the treasury of the temple" (verse 20). In the beginning of this new discourse He tells them that He is going His way. What way is this? It is the way marked out in the eternal purposes of God. That way led Him from the throne of glory down into the world to die for sinners, and after that the way led Him back to the Father. "I go my way"; blessed expression! He came that way for us, and those who believe on Him, for whom He died, follow Him in that way to the Father's house. Then they would seek Him. This evidently means that they would look for the Messiah, but, having rejected Him, there is no other to seek. As the result of His rejection, they would die in their sins, "whither I go, ye cannot come." This is a most solemn utterance of our Lord. Those who do not believe on Him die in their sins and, dying unsaved, there is no possibility of ever being in heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ has gone. No matter what theories have been invented to hold out a hope for the unsaved after death, they all wither into nothingness before this word of our Lord. But they were unable to understand His words. Perhaps their own murderous thoughts suggested the idea that He meant to take His own life, "Will He kill Himself?" It shows how dreadful is the darkness of the natural man.

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*"The expression should be carefully noticed, and remembered by all true Christians. It teaches that the wicked can do no harm to Christ and His members until God gives them permission. Not a hair of a believer's head can be touched until God in His sovereign wisdom allows it. It teaches that all times are in God's hand. There is an allotted 'hour' both for doing and for suffering. Till the hour comes for dying no Christian will die. When the hour comes nothing can prevent his death. These are comfortable truths, and deserve attention. Christ's members are safe and immortal till their work is done. When they suffer, it is because God wills it and sees it good." —"Thoughts on John."

Then He gives a double contrast. "Ye are from beneath; I am from above. Ye are of this world; I am not of this world." And this is not only true of the Jews who listened to His words, it is true of every human being. By nature we are all from beneath, we are all of this world, and because we are from beneath and of this world, we are lost sinners. But how precious to know that through grace, through His own blessed work of sinbearing, the sinner who believes on Him is born from above. The "from beneath" is changed to "from above." The newborn believer then is no longer of this world. He expressed this marvelous truth in His own great prayer (chapter xvii) when praying for His own, for all who believe, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

Then He takes up the previous thought of "dying in your sins." What does it mean? Did He mean their individual sins only. It means that the great sin on account of which they die in their sins is unbelief. "For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." This is still the Truth. No matter how great a sinner a man or woman may be, there is salvation at the door of each by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, believing that He is the Son of God and died for the ungodly. No matter how morally a man and a woman may live, how much good they may do, if they reject the Lord Jesus Christ, if they refuse to believe on Him, it is true of all, as it was true of those Jews in the days of our Lord, "if ye believe not that I am He (the Lord) ye shall die in your sins."

This only incensed them more. Who art Thou? they asked Him, perhaps sarcastically, certainly not honestly. Maybe they tried to ensnare Him. His brief answer suggests this thought, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."

Once more He bears witness of His oneness with Him who sent Him, His Father. Many other things He might have spoken and many other judgments He might have uttered concerning them; He did not do so, for He spoke just those things which accorded with what He had heard of Him, who sent Him. But so dense were their minds and unbelieving hearts that they understood not that He spoke to them of the Father.

Verses 28-33. In the next place He speaks of His coming death. The words are a prophecy. He predicts once more His death by crucifixion and that they would do it, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man." But what does it mean when He tells them that then they would know "that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself"? Does it mean that some of them would then believe on Him and acknowledge Him as the Messiah, the Son of God? Or does our Lord mean that the judgments which came upon the unbelieving nation would be a proof by which they would find out that He was the sent One of the Father? We think both views are true. After His death thousands of the Jews who had rejected Him believed on His Name and were saved. His resurrection demonstrated the fact that He is the Son of God, and that all He spoke was of the Father. But, on the other hand, the Jews, and Jerusalem, impenitent as a nation, found out also that He is the Son of God. The great Jewish historian Josephus attributed rightly the misfortunes of the Jewish people to the death of Christ. What calmness and assurance breathe in His words, "And He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." Never was that fellowship between the Father and the Son broken. On the Cross He was forsaken of God, but in anticipation of His coming suffering He could say to His disciples, "Ye shall leave Me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (xvi:32). Then many believed on Him, but not in the true sense of the word. They were convinced in a certain measure, but hearts and consciences were not touched. We have no record that they fell at His feet to worship Him, or that they followed Him as true disciples.

Those who professed to believe on Him He now addresses in a few sentences, and what follows demonstrates the fact stated above that they did not believe on Him in true faith. He gives them a test of true discipleship. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Such is the only real and safe proof of discipleship. He that is truly saved and a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ will continue in His Word. "And ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free." Knowing the Lord Jesus Christ is knowing the Truth, for He is the Truth. And furthermore He is the key which unlocks all the Truth of God, for He is the center of God's revelation. And Christ the Truth, He and His Word, make us free, free from the bondage and burden of sin, free to serve God in newness of life. But how much more there is included in this one verse!

Verses 33-41. Those whom He addressed had professed faith in Him. But now their language in answer to His words betrays their condition. Had they been true believers they would have accepted His Word and continued in it. They were proud, self-exalted Jews, unchanged from the condition in which they were when John the Baptist called them to repentance, for they said then, "We have Abraham for our father" (Matt. iii:19). They boasted of freedom, yet they were domineered over by the Romans, and it was a heavy yoke. But underneath this language was the unchanged heart, the heart of pride and self-sufficiency. It is so today. We find thousands upon thousands in the professing churches who are in the same condition. They have never seen their lost condition; they do not believe that they are dead in trespasses and sins; they do not own themselves helpless and slaves to sin. What the Jews said, "We be Abraham's seed," is heard throughout the professing sphere of Christendom; "We go to church. . . . we were baptized. . . . we do this and do that. . . . How can we be lost?"

His answer to them is, "Whosever committeth sin is a servant of sin." This sentence demonstrates what freedom the Lord meant, not political freedom, but freedom from the slavery of sin in which every natural man is. Man is a sinner, he has a nature which is corrupt and which is capable of nothing else but sinning. He must live habitually in sin, and therefore he is mastered by sin, he is a slave. It is the new nature, the new life in Christ, which delivers from this bondage.

The servant abideth not in the house forever, but the Son abideth ever. They were under the Jewish economy nothing but servants, and there was no hope for them in their own system of ever advancing beyond that, or abiding in the house forever. It is different with a son, he abides forever. And Sonship was offered to them by Him who had spoken to them, and in whom they professed to believe. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." This connects with verse 32 and has the same meaning, with the additional meaning of free from the law, which is a bondage and heavy yoke.

They did not need to tell Him that they were Abraham's seed. They sought to kill Him, because His word had no place in them, they had refused to believe on Him, and therefore the murderer from the beginning could use them as his ready instruments. This thought is further brought out in the verses which follow. He, the Son of God, speaks what He had seen with the Father, but they did what they had seen of their father, and their father was the devil, as we learn from verse 44.

Once more they fall back on their father Abraham, most likely because the Lord had contrasted His Father with their father; so they said "Abraham is our father." But if they really were Abraham's children they would also do Abraham's works. But how could they do Abraham's works if they had not Abraham's faith. He believed God and that was counted to him for righteousness. He whom Abraham believed was now in their midst, yet they did not believe on Him; therefore they were not in truth children of Abraham. He uncovered their hearts. They sought to kill Him, and He calls Himself "a man" who had told them the truth. Would Abraham have done a deed like this? Here is the evidence that they did not the works of Abraham, but the deeds of their father, another one. This they resented and then claimed the Fatherhood of God, with all their satanic wickedness in their hearts.

Verses 42-47. But was this the truth? He is the Son; they hated Him whom they saw; if God were their Father they would manifest it by loving the Son, whom the Father had sent, who had come to them from God. "Love" it has been truly said, "is the infallible mark of all true children of God. Would we know whether we are born again, whether we are children of God? There is one simple way of finding it out. Do we love Christ? If not, it is vain and idle to talk of God as our Father, and ourselves as God's children. No love to Christ, no sonship to God." They did not understand His speech because they were not willing to hear and accept His word.

Then He tells them to their faces what He meant when He had spoken of their father. In verse 44 we have the Lord's revelation concerning the devil, that once magnificent and glorious being, who fell and became the enemy of God. They were his followers, for they were ready to do his bidding in killing the Lord of glory. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, for there is no truth in him. Some apply this to his first murderous act, when he induced Cain to slay his brother Abel, but it rather means that this being from the beginning was determined to bring in sin and death. Besides this he is the liar and the father of it. Our Lord teaches here the personality of the devil; He teaches the fall of this being as well as the character of him. Yet the modern Theology denies both the existence of the devil and the fall of such a being. If the devil can laugh, he must surely laugh over these theological scholars whom he has blinded to such a degree that they deny their own master's existence. The devil spoke the lie, the Jews believed that lie; the Son of God in their midst spoke the truth, and Him they believed not.

Two questions follow: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" There was no answer. In Him was no sin; He was holy and undefiled; not a flaw in all His spotless holy life. The second question, "If I say the Truth, why do ye not believe Me?" Nor did they have an answer for this. The Lord answers the last question. "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." They were not of God, therefore they hated Him and did not believe His words.

Verses 48-53. The Lord had told them "ye are of your father, the devil" (verse 44). They now bear witness to the truth of His words, for what they say concerning Him is satanic abuse and blasphemy. They did not understand what He had been saying to them; their natural minds could not lay hold on what He taught, yet they must have felt the power of His words and the power of His own person. Unable to answer they manifested their hatred in calling Him vile names. To call a Jew a Samaritan meant the same as making of the Jew an outcast, a deluded, wicked apostate. Furthermore they charged Him with being possessed by a demon. With this they committed the same sin which is called in the Gospel of Matthew "the blasphemy and sin against the Holy Spirit" (Matthew xii:31), for if He was a Samaritan and controlled by the devil's power, His works were not done by the power of God.

But this horrible abuse only brings out the moral glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He does not hurl back at them some harsh words, which they well deserved. One feels the very calmness of His holy soul in the recorded answer He gives. "I have not a devil; but I honor My Father, and ye dishonor Me." It is a straightforward denial of their blasphemous charge. In all His words, in all His works, He honored the Father who had sent Him; hence they were dishonoring Him. Had He come simply to seek glory for Himself, the accusation they uttered would have completely humiliated Him in His ambition; but He did not come to seek His own glory. He sought only the glory of the Father, therefore they had insulted God. He added a solemn word—"There is One that seeketh and judgeth." He means the Father. While He the Son came to seek His Glory, the Father seeketh the Glory of His Son. Whenever we, as believers, honor the Son, seek His glory, exalt His Name, we please the Father, whose delight is in the Son. But the Father not only seeketh the Glory of the Son, but He is going to judge. He will deal with all who dishonor His beloved Son. "What have you done with my Son?" will be the great question the unsaved and the Gospel-rejectors have to face, when He, the Son, will occupy the judgment throne, to execute the judgments the Father has committed unto Him. All the dishonor done to Christ, the dishonor done to Him by the destructive critics, by Unitarians, Christian Scientists, Jews, Theosophists and Spiritists will then be reckoned with.

And now once more He speaks of the great truth which all along in this Gospel is unfolded, the truth concerning eternal life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep My saying, he shall never see death." This had been His great message in the sixth chapter, and now once more He declared it in their hearing. If they would keep His saying, which means, hear the words He had spoken, believe on them and obey them, death could not touch them. It cannot mean physical death, but that other death, the eternal loss of the soul. Augustinus comments on this passage as follows: "The death from which our Lord came to deliver us is the second death, eternal death, the death of hell, the death of damnation with the devil and his angels. That is indeed death; for this death of ours is only a migration."

These wonderful words of life brought forth the former accusation from the listening Jews. They found in them, in the darkness of their hearts, an evidence that their charge that He had a devil was true. "Now we know that thou hast a devil." Their reasoning is human. They think of Abraham and the prophets. They are all dead and here is one who claims that if His sayings are kept by a man "he shall never taste death." But the Lord had not said this at all; they misquoted His words. Thus they always perverted His words; it is still so today as far as the blind world is concerned. Whom makest thou thyself in view of the fact that Abraham is dead and the prophets are dead?

Verses 54-59. He disclaims all honor for Himself; His Father honoreth Him, the same whom they claimed as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. He told them that they did not know Him. They professed to know God; by their deeds they denied Him. But He, the Son, knows the Father, and if He were to say "I know Him not" He would be a liar, as they were liars. Then He added that significant statement: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad." Previously they had asked "art thou greater than our father Abraham?" This question He now answers. He does not say "our father Abraham" as the Jews still say when speaking of the father of the race. By using "your" He gave them to understand the He cannot be classed with the nation as such. While He was the Son of David and the Son of Abraham, yet was

He not the Son of Abraham in the same sense as every Jew is the Son of Abraham. Then the omniscient Lord said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day, that he actually saw it and was glad. This shows that Abraham had knowledge of the coming of the Messiah, his seed, in whom all the nations are to be blest. The Holy Spirit opened the eyes of the father of the faithful and showed him the future days of the promised One. We do not know at what time such a vision was given to Abraham. It may have been when the Lord visited him in the tent at Mamre; perhaps it was on the great day when he put his beloved Isaac upon the altar as the sacrifice, and received him back from the altar, the blessed types of the death and the resurrection of our Lord. It is certain from the words of the Lord that Abraham looked forward to the days when He, the Lord of glory, would be in the midst of His people.

Astonished at such a statement His hearers said, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Some have supposed that the face of our Lord must have looked care-worn, furrowed by deep lines, so that the people thought that He was perhaps nearly fifty years old. It was probably only an expression of common usage; His exact age was not known to them. What He meant they hear now from His lips. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Without doubt this is one of the greatest words spoken by our Lord in witnessing to Himself. There is only one explanation possible. He speaks of Himself as Jehovah, the I Am, the self-existing One. Before them stands the same One who appeared in the burning bush unto Moses and said, "Say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me." Here then is the great testimony He bears as to His own person. He reveals Himself as Jehovah, the pre-existent One. Before Abraham was—not I was—*but, I Am.*

This, at least, the Jews seemed to understand. They were not in doubt of what He meant. He had spoken to them in no uncertain tones and they realized that He claimed to be Jehovah, very God Himself. All their satanic hatred, born of unbelief, is now manifested. They took up stones to stone Him. They were but following their master, the murderer, from the beginning. It is one of Satan's attempts to kill the Lord. "But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." Did He merely hide Himself, or was it a miraculous disappearance? We believe it was the latter. In his comment Augustinus says, "Jesus did not hide Himself in a corner of the temple as if He were afraid, or take refuge in a house or run behind a wall or a pillar; but by His heavenly power He made Himself invisible to His enemies, and went through the midst of them." We believe this is the correct meaning of this event. His enemies could not touch Him till the appointed hour for His passion and death came. And when it came He suffered and died, not because He could not escape, but because He would not.

CHAPTER IX

Verses 1-5. The contents of the entire ninth chapter are only found in this Gospel. As to the time, whether immediately after the happenings recorded in the previous chapter, or some time after, we have no certainty. It was probably a few days later, on a Sabbath (Verse 14). Some have stated that the miracle of the healing of the blind man happened as the Lord passed from the murderous multitude, inasmuch as the word rendered "passed by" is the same as in the last verse of the eighth chapter. But that is impossible, for we read, "Jesus hid Himself," and that was a miraculous hiding.

As he passed by he saw that blind man. No appeal came from his lips. He knew nothing of Him and His power who passed by, nor could he see the Lord. But the Lord saw the blind man, and perhaps halted and looked compassionately upon him. How the disciples knew that his affliction was congenital blindness we do not know; perhaps he was like the impotent man in the third chapter of Acts, a familiar figure, and, as a mendicant, may have been in the same place for many years. His disciples asked Him, "who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind." The question arose undoubtedly from the Jewish opinion that such afflictions were the result of some special sin and that the man born blind was punished on account of it. In a general way all disease and affliction is the result of sin. The Jewish error that physical afflictions are the direct result of some wicked deed may have originated by misunderstanding what the Lord spoke in Exodus xx:5, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." Job's friends also shared this common idea as to suffering, and charged Job with being an unrighteous man. It seems that the inhabitants of the island Melita also held the same view, for when Paul had been bitten by the viper they said, "this man is a murderer."

The same is held by some of the extreme "faith healers" and so-called "divine healers." They teach that a child of God is afflicted on account of some unconfessed sin; some have gone so far as to say when no results follow the "anointing with oil" and the sick one is not raised up, that it is on account of some special sin. This is foolish, unscriptural fanaticism.

The Lord corrects this popular error, that some special affliction is and must be a punishment for some special sin. "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." The blindness with which the man was afflicted from his mother's womb was not the result of some particular sin. This man's blindness was known to God; it was permitted by Him in His all-wise purpose. It was thus allowed by God so that His own glory through this miracle of mercy and power might be demonstrated—"that the works of God should be manifested in him." A double work was then manifest in this man; he was miraculously cured and then, after his cure, another work of God was worked, when he believed on the Son of God; as it is written, "the work of God is to believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John vi:29).

It is a deep and weighty statement our Lord made, and throws some light on the question of the origin and existence of evil. God permits it and allows it to exist for His own glory; yet this does not fully explain God's great mystery, unfathomed by the finite mind of man, as to evil. The man was thus ordained to be blind so that the works of God might be made manifest. It was so with Lazarus, whose death was permitted "for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (John xi:4).

Then our Lord speaks of the fact that His activity as man upon the earth is now soon to close. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." But what did He mean when He spoke of the approaching night. As long as He was here on earth it was "day." When he left this earth, rejected by man, it became "night." This age in which we live is "night," yet faith in that night, the faith of the believer, can look up into the heavens and know itself there in Christ. Such use is made of night and day by the Apostle in Romans xiii:12—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand." The night is now, when Christ is not here; the day refers to His coming again. This interpretation is fully confirmed by the next statement our Lord makes: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Verses 6-7. The blind man had listened to the words of the Lord Jesus, but we hear nothing of an appeal from his lips. The Lord healed him of his blindness unasked and unexpectedly. Instead of speaking the word of power by which He could have given sight to the eyes of this blind man, He did, partially, that which He had done before in healing one deaf and dumb (Mark vii:33), and another blind man (Mark viii:23). He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle and then anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. It is said that it was believed at that time that clay and spittle had curative properties, but even if there were any truth in this foolish belief, one born blind, with no optic nerves, could not be healed by such a remedy. Why did the Lord do this? To do this He had to lean down, as He did in the eighth chapter, when He leaned down and wrote on the ground. The finger which wrote thus had also written the law which pronounced death upon the sinner, and here in forming clay with spittle, we have a reminder that He once formed man out of the dust of the earth and that He has therefore the power to heal one born blind. And the miracle which took place is the evidence that He who healed the man was the Almighty Creator Himself. Spittle is connected with humiliation and deepest reproach. The action of our Lord appears then to be a witness to His own person. He is the Lord who has all power; He came in humiliation to suffer shame. He had come to Israel to open their eyes.

But the application of the clay did not remove the blindness of the man. If nothing else had been done, the blind man would not have been healed. The Lord sent him to a pool of water. "Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing." That also was the instruction given to the leper Naaman when Elisha told him, "Go, wash in Jordan." Not that the waters of Jordan or Siloam had power in them to heal of leprosy or blindness. It was a test of faith and obedience. The water typifies both the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The meaning of Siloam is especially emphasized as being "Sent," because the heart must believe on Him who is the sent One, whom the Father sent into the world to do His will and to finish the great work on the cross; then the Holy Spirit does His gracious work. And so this blind man obeyed the voice he had heard, though he did not see the person. We do not know if some one took him by the hand when he expressed the desire, or if he groped his own way towards the pool of Siloam. He did not question the direction given to him, but obeyed implicitly. Then he was healed and came seeing. And this is the process still with the natural man in spiritual darkness.

A careful survey of the Gospels will show that our Lord healed more blind people than any other class of afflicted ones. A deaf and dumb one had his hearing and speech restored; then there was one case of palsy and dropsy healed; two lepers and two suffering with fever are recorded as having been healed; three were raised from the dead, but four, or probably five, cases of blindness healed are recorded. The reason for this is not far to seek. In the great prophecy of Isaiah relating to the Messianic Kingdom, the coming millennium, we read, "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened" (Isaiah xxxv:5). Again it is written in Isaiah, "in that day . . . the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness" (xxix:18); and in Isaiah xlii:7 it is stated that the work of the King will be "to open the eyes as of the blind." These miracles the Lord wrought when He opened the eyes of the blind attested Him as the promised King. They were of an evidential character and showed to Israel that the King was in their midst with the powers of "the age to come . . ." Significant, therefore, is this healing of the man born blind, as it follows after His great self-witness in the preceding chapter, on account of which the unbelieving Jews wanted to stone him. The miracle showed Him that He is Jehovah and Israel's King.

Modern "faith healers," the present-day miracle men and women, with their twisted and unscriptural teachings, claim to perpetuate miracles of healing, among which the healing of the blind takes a prominent place. They sometimes claim, what deluded Christian Science claims, that they do the same miracles our Lord did. But have all these "divine healers" ever healed a man who was born blind? Will they ever do it? Certainly not.

Verses 8-12. The miracle attracted wide attention. All the neighbors, who probably knew the blind beggar for many years, came together, and seeing him healed, asked in astonishment: "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some, who knew him well, said, "This is he," while others expressed a doubt and said, "He is like him." He himself set all their questionings at rest by affirming that it was he.

They asked him the question how his eyes had been opened, and he gives them a simple account of what had happened. But when they asked him "where is He?"—that is, Jesus, who had healed him—he answered, "I know not."

Verzes 13-16. There must have been great excitement among the people on account of this great miracle. Those who knew him intimately were convinced that it was a miracle. He had been blind from his birth and now he possessed complete sight. It was therefore not a "fake-miracle," like those claimed today in Christendom by the so-called miracle men and women who, through hypnotism, do certain things which last just as long as a hypnotic spell lasts. The people therefore brought the man before the religious authorities to be examined by them. And here the information is given that it was on the Sabbath-day our Lord had made the clay and healed the blind man. The Pharisees now begin to question him how he had received his sight. The healed beggar gives a straightforward witness; they could not pick a flaw in the simple testimony. As it was with the lame man in the fifth chapter, whom the Lord also healed on the Sabbath day, and on account of which they tried to slay Him, so here; they charge Him with not being of God because He had done the deed on the Sabbath.

But not all of the rulers branded the Lord as a wicked man, because He had done this good deed on the Sabbath. Others said: "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" We doubt not that Nicodemus headed this faction, which attempted a defense of the Lord. This great Pharisee and teacher in Israel had given expression to his belief when he visited the Lord. He was convinced that the miracles the Lord Jesus did were of God and that God was with Him. As a result there was a division among them (See viii:43).

Verses 17-23. On account of the division among those who were the rulers of the people, they were obliged to investigate this case more fully. A closer examination therefore follows. They therefore inquire first of all what he thinks of the one who opened his eyes. With this question they practically confessed that they believed that his eyes had been opened. If this question was asked by those who declared that "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath," then malice must have been the motive; they hoped that some damaging statement might come from the lips of the healed man. He answered, "He is a prophet." How did the man know that. It is evident that the healed beggar did not see the Lord at all. The Lord sent him to wash, and the record says nothing of the blind man that he had even a glimpse of Him who had anointed his eyes and told him to wash. Verses 35-38 make this very clear. How, then, could he say that He is a prophet. In all probability he must have asked the people who it was. And they may have answered, "Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth"; for this seems to have been the popular conception among the masses.

He must have heard that it was the Prophet of Nazareth; he believed what he heard and gladly confessed Him as Prophet. Faith thus began in his soul.

Finding that the healed man gave a straightforward answer once more, which they could not twist and pervert, they tried another avenue of approach. They tried to find a way to discredit the miracle by refusing to believe that he had been blind at all. They called his parents, hoping that they might say something which they might misconstrue and disprove the miracle. They ask them if he is their son and if he was really born blind. It was a direct question and it was unhesitatingly answered by the father and mother of the man. We know this is our son, and that he was born blind. There could be no possible mistake about it. But they also asked, "How then doth he now see."

But instead of repeating the story as their son had given it to them, they professed ignorance as to who opened his eyes and by what means it was accomplished. They tell the rulers of the people that their son is no longer a child, that he is of age; that they cannot be held responsible for him. They request the rulers to ask him, and that he will speak for himself. We are not left in doubt why they spoke thus. It was for fear of the Jews of authority and power. The Sanhedrim had agreed that anyone who would confess that this Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ should be put out of the synagogue and be excommunicated. They feared if they rehearsed what they had heard, how the Lord Jesus performed the miracle, that this might be their fate.

Verses 24-29. Completely defeated with attempt to upset the story of the healing of this man, unable to get any information from the parents, which would have helped them in the denial of the miracle, they once more call the man himself. They start in with a very pious phrase, "Give God the praise." Acknowledge yourself now that only God could have done this miracle of opening your eyes. This of course was true. Only God can open the eyes of one who was blind from birth. But the pious statement was pure hypocrisy, for they added, "We know this man is a sinner." They tried to ensnare him to assent to this statement that God had healed him, and then reject Him who wrought the miracle. How simple is this man's answer. He speaks of two things, one thing which he knew not: "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not." Then he spoke of another thing he knew: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." Concerning Him who healed him he could not bear witness, for he knew not who he was. Later the Lord revealed Himself to the healed one and then he fell at His feet to worship.

But of one thing he was sure. One thing could never be questioned. One thing was gloriously true, "Being blind, now I see" (literal rendering). The awful night of blindness had been lifted and he saw the sun and enjoyed a new existence. A wonderful change had come over him and all the world could never shake his testimony.

And millions after him have used his words of testimony after being saved by grace. Yea, this is the true confession of every child of God who has passed from death to life, from darkness to light, from the power of Satan into God: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." The great change brought about by the operation of the Spirit of God in the heart and life of the believer is as great as the healing of a man born blind.

The Jewish rulers were again defeated. They had acknowledged that the man had been healed, and now his own words sealed this fact beyond any doubt whatever. Yet they were not discouraged. Once more they questioned him as to the manner in which our Lord had opened his eyes. They but digged their own graves of shameful defeat.

It seems as if the healed beggar lost his patience. He had told them before how the Lord had made clay, put it on his eyes, sent him to the pool to wash, and now they asked once more, "What did He do to thee." In sarcasm he answered them, and asked why they wanted to hear it again; if they intended to be His disciples also.

They reviled him for his bold language and ridicule and charged him with being a disciple of the Lord, which in the darkness of their wicked hearts they imagined a great dishonor, while they claimed to be Moses' disciples. They were convinced that God spoke to Moses. In this at least these religious corrupt leaders were better than the destructive critic leaders of Christendom, who deny that God ever spoke to Moses. But they denied that the Lord, whom they called "this fellow," had been sent by God; they believed that He had no divine commission, yet the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Jehovah had appeared unto Moses, commissioned Moses, and spoken to him. He is greater than Moses.

Verses 30-34. We doubt not that the man in answering back had the aid of the Holy Spirit, for what he says presents a perfect and unanswerable argument. He expressed astonishment that these leaders of the nation said that they knew Him not, nor who gave Him the power to perform so great a miracle in opening his eyes. Then he declares that it would be impossible that He who had opened his eyes was a sinner, for God would not hear a sinner, but if God acknowledges a man and manifests His power through him, he must be a true worshipper of God and be obedient to Him. He becomes bolder and declares that since the world began such a thing as opening the eyes of a blind man, by a mere man, was never heard before. Then he crowned his masterly argument by expressing his conviction that the man who had healed him must be of God.

He had silenced the great men of the Pharisees completely. They could not reply to these statements and were, therefore, defeated. All that was left to them was either to accept the testimony or to reject it. They became infuriated. They charged him that he was altogether born in sins, that he was a wicked man, and they cast him out. They did that which we read in verse 23, they put him out of the synagogue.

Verses 35-41. Probably the man was staggered. He may have trembled at the thought that he had been excommunicated, for it was a shame to be put outside; it made him an outcast, one who had no more right to the appointed worship and the privileges of the commonwealth of Israel. It must have had the meaning for him as if he were now a lost soul.

They had cast him out, but in doing this they only cast him into the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Where our Lord was while all this took place we do not know, but we know that He knew all that had happened, and though He was not bodily present, He had heard every word which had been spoken, for He is the omniscient Lord. When the excommunication of the healed man was publicly announced then our Lord looked for the man. He had kept track of him; he was never out of His sight. He found him. Says Chrysostom on this passage: "They who for the sake of the truth and confession of Christ suffer anything and are insulted, these are specially honored. So it was here with the blind man. The Jews cast him out of the temple, and the Lord of the temple found him. He was dishonored by those who dishonor Christ, and was honored by the Lord of angels." He had lost the synagogue but finds instead the Lord, heaven and glory. The synagogue would not longer have him, but he becomes the sheep of the good Shepherd, as we find it in the chapter which follows.

He asks him a direct question: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Then came from the man the longing heart cry, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" And he did not need to wait for the answer to his question. The Lord at once revealed Himself. "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." Thus our Lord once more bore witness to His Deity. Did the blind man know that the One who was speaking to him was He who had healed him. The text says nothing about it. As we saw before, the blind man had not seen the Lord after his eyes had been opened. Though the Lord did not say to him in words, I am He who healed thee, yet the man must have known and felt, as the Lord addresses him and reveals Himself as the Son of God, that He had healed him. He probably also recognized Him by the tone of His voice. Then he said, "Lord, I believe" and worshipped Him. Faith and true worship go together.

When next our Lord declares that He came for judgment into the world, it does not mean that He came for condemnation (John iii:17); He came to reveal the right conditions, to lay them bare by His omniscient discrimination. The comment of Augustinus on this verse is correct: "Who are those that see, those who think they see, who believe they see? The judgment which Christ has brought into the world is not wherewith He shall judge the quick and the dead in the end. It is a work of discrimination rather, by which He discerneth the case of them that believe from that of the proud who think they see, and therefore are worse blinded." "Those who see not" may be applied to the Gentiles, and "those who see," or claimed to see, the Jews. The boast of the Jews, especially the boast of the Pharisees, was that they had the light. Paul bears witness to this in Rom. iii:19: "And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness." And when He came who is the Light of the world they rejected Him, and thus they became blind, with all their profession that they were seeing.

Some of the Pharisees listen to these words. They voice at once their displeasure, realizing He meant them. Are we blind also? It was another sneer at Him and His teaching. He answered them as they well deserved. If they were really blind they would have no sin in having rejected Him, but their boast was that they were seeing, and yet they rejected Him; their sin therefore "remaineth."

CHAPTER X

Verses 1–6. The blind man, whom our Lord had healed, who had fallen at His feet, worshipping Him as the Son of God, and who had been cast out by the blind leaders of the blind, had become the sheep of the Shepherd, who came to seek and to save that which is lost. The teachings given next by our Lord are therefore closely related to this incident. The beginning of this chapter refers to the false teachers and guides of the Jewish people, those whom the Lord denounced in the closing verse of the eighth chapter. The sixth verse tells us that the Lord spoke to them in a parable,"This parable spake Jesus unto them." It is one of the few parables recorded in John's Gospel not found in the Synoptic Gospels.

The parable is introduced with another, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." The parable contains a very familiar figure of the Old Testament Scriptures. Jacob in his prophecy spoke of "the Shepherd of Israel," who is "the stone of Israel" as well (Gen.xliv:24); in the eightieth Psalm, that great prophetic Psalm, the Shepherd of Israel is addressed, and that Shepherd is the Lord Himself, for "He dwelleth between the Cherubim" (Psa. lxxx:1). Isaiah beholds Him feeding

His flock, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd" (Isa. xl:11); Ezekiel received a great message concerning the false shepherds of Israel, their judgment, and the true Shepherd who will gather His sheep (Ezek. xxxiv); Zechariah, too, had a vision concerning the shepherds (chapter xi); and in another passage we read, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn my hand to the little ones" (Zech. xiii:7). If the listening Pharisees, the false shepherds of the nation, knew their own Scriptures, the parable of the Lord in its meaning would have been clear to them, "but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them" (verse 6).

Here the sheepfold is Judaism, and to it the Shepherd of Israel, the promised Messiah, had come. He came in the appointed way, not in "some other way," like the thief and the robber, those who sought their own gain and benefit. These are the false shepherds, including the leaders of the people in whose presence He spoke this allegory. And because He came by the right door to the sheepfold, in grace and righteousness, as the holy One, the porter opened to Him. The porter signifies the power of God by His Spirit, by which the door was opened, though the false shepherds tried to keep Him out. He came, and as a result "the sheep hear His voice." But all the sheep of Israel did not hear His voice and accept Him; only those who were given to Him by His Father. Thus He came and called "His own sheep" by name. The healed man was one of them, and so were Philip and Nathanael, as well as Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and the others who believed on Him and followed the true Shepherd.

Then follows what is nowhere mentioned in the prophets, "He leadeth them out," which means that He leads them out from the fold of Judaism into different pasture. Luther comments on this passage in the following words: "The 'leading out' is the Christian liberty, that they are now free and no longer locked up and imprisoned as they were before under the anxious constraint and fear of the law and divine judgment; but are now under the sweet kingdom of the grace of Christ." Those who followed Him were set free, receiving from Him eternal life; they were to be brought outside of the Jewish fold and to constitute afterwards not another fold, but His flock, the one flock, His Church. He Himself "goeth before them" as the shepherd goes before the sheep. Wherever the Shepherd goes the sheep follow after Him. They cast Him out and He was outside; there the sheep are with Him. The path He went is the path in which His sheep follow. And when the Shepherd died for the sheep, He went before them in a still higher sense. The good Shepherd became the great Shepherd of the Sheep in resurrection, and has gone before to the place where in His own time all His sheep will follow Him. The mark of His own sheep is that they hear His voice, and that a stranger they will not follow; they own but the one voice and the one authority. Like the sheep in the pasture, which know the tone of the shepherd's voice; but when a strange voice calls they become frightened, and instead of obeying the strange voice, they flee; thus His own sheep know the voice of Himself, and, having spiritual discernment, they will not follow another, though the false shepherd may simulate His voice.

Verses 7-13. There was no response from the side of His hearers, for their darkened minds, and probably more so, their proud hearts, kept them from understanding what He said unto them. If they had known the message of Ezekiel (chapter xxxiv) and believed what Ezekiel had written, they would have understood what He spoke about. He, therefore continues to speak to them: "Verily, verily I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep." While He entered as the true Shepherd by the door into the sheepfold, Judaism, He now speaks of Himself as the door of the sheep. The only way of becoming a sheep of His flock is by Himself; there is no other way into the flock of God, the sheep of Christ, but by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The eighth verse presents a difficulty: "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them." That this cannot mean the true Prophets of God, who came before Christ appeared on earth, is obvious. Attention has been called to the fact that in a number of leading manuscripts the two words translated "before me" are omitted. Others translated these two words "instead of Me." The latter would necessitate the view that our Lord speaks here prophetically, inasmuch as no persons preceded Him who claimed Messiahship, but the false Christs came after Him. The difficulty seems to disappear if the words "before Me" are taken to mean precedence in authority, those who claimed precedence above Him. The Greek tense of the verb "come" (Aorist) does not necessarily mean a coming of the past only. Now the Pharisees rejected the authority of Christ and claimed to be teachers above Him. This they did in the examination of the blind man (ix:16 and 24). The view, then, that our Lord had in mind the Pharisees of His own time, who rejected Him and denied His Messianic authority, thereby claiming a place above Him, seems to be the correct one. The learned Lightfoot, in his comment, says that our Lord probably refers to the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Essenes,who had long misled the Jews before Christ came, and that these three Jewish sects were the three false shepherds whose casting off is foretold in Zech. xi:8. And the sheep, true believers like Simeon and Anna, with many others did not hear them and placed no faith in these arrogant leaders and teachers of their nation.

In the next verse we find another mention of the word "door," and here the great blessing—which is for those who have entered in by Him, who is the door—is more fully revealed. "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." When He speaks of Himself again as the door, it is in anticipation of His death and resurrection. Not the Christ who walked in obedience on the earth is the door through which salvation, and all that goes with it, is bestowed through grace, but the Christ who died and rose again. Of this He speaks directly. Through the shepherd who died for the sheep salvation is secured. The first great blessing through Him, by believing on Him, is salvation. This priceless gift for which He paid as the substitute of His sheep, belongs to each believer; it is the present and eternal possession of every sheep of Christ. That door stands open for "any man"; this is the "whosoever" of John iii:16 and Rev.xxii:17.

But there is more than salvation, there is liberty and food as well. "And shall go in and out," this is liberty. The narrow fold does not permit that, for it means confinement, lack of liberty. Thus it was in the Jewish fold. Christendom speaks unscripturally of different folds today: it means also confinement and not the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. There is an anticipative statement of this word of our Lord in Num. xxvii:17. Moses asked the Lord to set a man over the congregation, those who are the people of His pasture, the sheep of His hand (Psa. xcv:7), and Moses said that the man whom the Lord would choose "may go out before them, and go in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." Then the Lord appointed Joshua, at his word they were to go out and at his word they were to go in (verse 21). Joshua is the name of our Lord; for the Greek Jesus is the Hebrew Joshua. And Joshua stands typically for Christ risen from the dead, who brings in His people. The Lord Jesus leads out into perfect liberty His own sheep and leads them in. Under the law there was no such liberty, but He came, sent forth by God to redeem those under the law, to lead them forth from bondage into the liberty of sons (Gal. iv).

And there is food too, "and shall find pasture." The pasture is not in the fold. The sheep must go forth, outside of the fold, to find that which sustains. Thus spake David of the great Shepherd, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures" (Psa. xxiii). The blessed Shepherd provides the food for His own; yea, He Himself is that food.

This is followed by a contrast.—"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The false shepherd, the thief, behind whom stands the liar and murderer from the beginning, comes to steal, to kill and to destroy; He came for the one great purpose, "that they might have life and have it abundantly." The thief came to take life; He came to give life. What is the life and the life abundant? Life is the possession of all who believe on Him; the believers in the Old Testament possessed spiritual life, for in Him was life; and the life was the light of men (John i:4). But He had come, the true God and the eternal life, and as we have learned from the preceding chapters, eternal life is His gift to all who believe on Him. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life."

Those who heard Him speak and believed on Him when He was on earth received life, for He had said, "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." It was true then, as it is true now, "He that heareth my words and believeth Him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death into life" (John v:24). His disciples who had believed on Him possessed this life; they knew the Father and the Son, for "this is eternal life," as He tells us in His great prayer (chapter xvii), "that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." But life abundant, the fullness of that life, the abundance of it, was made known after His finished work, after He had passed through death, was raised from among the dead, seated at the right hand of God, and after the Holy Spirit came. Now the abundant life is fully revealed, and those who have believed on Him possess in Him that abundant life, which has triumphed over death; they are risen in Christ, seated in Christ, complete in Him, sons of God, heirs of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, one spirit with the Lord, identified with Him, and members of His body. This abundant life is the believer's portion. It does therefore not mean some kind of a deeper, individual experience, unscripturally termed "the second blessing," or "a holiness experience." Every believer through grace has this life abundantly.

Then follows that precious verse in which He speaks of Himself as the good Shepherd, and His sacrificial work. "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." This statement sums up all the predictions and types of the Old Testament Scriptures concerning Him and His work of love. He came to die for the sheep, those who are given to Him by the Father. This statement also answers completely the miserable invention that Christ died to seal in death the Truth He had preached, that He was a martyr on account of His convictions and His doctrine. He did not lay down His life for His doctrines, but for His sheep.

And now He speaks no longer of "thieves and robbers," who entered the sheepfold, but of the hireling shepherd. What a contrast! The hireling only cares for what he can get out of the sheep. "They feed themselves . . . they eat the fat . . .they clothe themselves with the wool" (Ezek. xxxiv:1–6). They are not his sheep and he cares not for them. When the wolf appears, he flees. The wolf catches the sheep and scattereth them. Such is the hireling; he knows nothing about loving the sheep. The wolves are the false prophets and teachers (Matt. vii:15 and Acts xx:29) and behind them stands the great enemy, Satan. The hireling is the instrument through which the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep.

Verses 14–18 Once more He speaks of Himself as the good shepherd, but now He mentions the fact that He knows His sheep, those for whom He died. He knows His own. Let us think of Him as One who knows thoroughly everything that each one of His own is feeling, and cannot utter to others. Every temptation from riches, from poverty, from solicitude, from society, from gifts of intellect, from the want of them, from gladness of spirit, from the barrenness and dreariness of it, from the whirlwind of passion, from the evil thoughts which spring up out of fleshly appetites, every sorrow and heartache, and everything else—He knows, and He knows us. And all He knows is through intense, inmost sympathy, not with the evil which is assaulting, but with His own who are assaulted by it. Thus He knows His sheep, as only He can know them; yea, He knows each by name. But the knowledge is mutual. He knows us and we know Him. But it is unfortunate that the authorized version has obscured the real meaning by a wrong punctuation. The right rendering is as follows: "I am the good shepherd and know Mine, and Mine know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father, and I lay down My life for the sheep." It is a most precious thought which we meet here, that the mutual knowledge of Christ and His sheep is after the pattern of the knowledge of the Father and the Son, and the Son's knowledge of the Father. The knowledge of the Father and of the Son is of mysterious, unfathomable depth, and because the knowledge of the Lord of His own and the knowledge of His own of Himself, is likewise so very wonderful it is thus linked with the mutual knowledge of Father and Son.

Then once more He speaks of His great work of redemption: "I lay down my life for the sheep." In connection with His coming sacrificial death our Lord speaks of "other sheep." These other sheep are the Gentiles. That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel, was not made known in other ages (Eph. iii:1-6). Here our Lord gives the hint that such would be the case after He had laid down His life for the sheep, not only for the sheep of the Jewish fold, but the other sheep, the Gentiles. The other sheep, which are not of the Jewish fold, He would also lead, and they would hear His voice and follow Him. Then there will be one flock and one shepherd. The authorized version states "one fold," but this is a serious mistake. Not *one fold*, but *one flock*, not an exclusive enclosure of an outward church—but one flock, all knowing the one Shepherd, and known of Him.* This one flock is the one body as revealed in the great Epistles, especially in Ephesians. The fold is Jewish; to speak of the Church as a fold is Judaizing the Church, which is the almost universal thing today. Even those who have been used to emphasize the truth of the oneness of the body of Christ, who speak and teach of the Church as "the one flock," have now their different *folds* or parties, and manifest the same unscriptural sectarian spirit as the more prominent sects.

"Therefore (on this account) the Father loves Me, because

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*Luther's comment is helpful: "The sheep, thought the most simple creature, is superior to all animals in this, that he soon hears his shepherd's voice, and will follow no other. Also he is clever enough to hang entirely on his shepherd, and to seek help from him only. He cannot help himself, nor find pasture for himself, nor heal himself, nor guard against wolves, but depends wholly and solely on the help of another."

I lay down my life, that I might take it again." This is another deep statement revealing the relation of the Father and the Son. It has been said "we must be content to admire and believe what we cannot fully understand." The infinite complacency, and approbation by the Father of the work His ever blessed Son came to do, was expressed by Him when our Lord in the beginning of His ministry, had gone into the baptismal waters of Jordan, and the Father's voice declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Nor must we overlook the fact that in these words, as well as what follows in the next verse, our Lord speaks of Himself consciously as God: "I lay down my life. . . . I take it again . . . I have power to lay it down. . . . I have power to take it again." It is the "I" of the Lord. Yet here, too, is His obedience in humiliation, "This commandment I received of My Father."

Verses 19–21. This is the third time according to this Gospel that there was a division on account of Him in Jerusalem. The schism was caused on account of these sayings. Thus was fulfilled Isa. viii:14: "He shall be . . . for a stone of stumbling"; and Simon's word, "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke ii:34). Then once more the blinded Jews accused Him of having a devil, while others defended Him. "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" His miracles were not spurious, or produced by hypnotic influences, as it is the case today in Christian Science and different faith healing cults, but they were the manifestation of His own Divine power. In Isa. xxxv:5, that great prophecy concerning the kingdom and the kingdom signs, the opening of the eyes of the blind is especially mentioned. Some understood and believed that He is the Messiah, the promised King of Israel.

Verses 22–31. The feast of dedication is mentioned only in this passage; nowhere else do we read of it. It is not a feast appointed by Jehovah, but a feast of commemoration of the cleansing of the temple after the defilement by Antiochus Epiphanes, and was first appointed by Judas Maccabaeus in the second century before Christ (see 1 Mac. iv:52–59). It is known today as the feast of *Chanukah*, a feast of joy and gladness. While they were making glad on account of the past deliverance, the Lord of Glory, who dwelt in visible glory in the tabernacle and in the Solomonic temple, was in their midst, uttering these words of eternal life, and they knew Him not.

The place where our Lord walked was in the outer court, a part of which was a kind of a colonnade, where teachers and rabbis often met, to debate on religious questions. Then a company of Jews, probably Pharisees, approached Him. Perhaps some time had elapsed, when they had become divided on account of Him. During this interval they probably decided to put a question to Him. "How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." They were undecided, in a state of suspense; they were uneasy. They demanded that He show Himself "plainly," which in this case means "openly, with all boldness." They evidently wanted a manifestation from His side which corresponded to their carnal expectations.

But He had told them and they had not believed. All along, beginning with the fifth chapter in this Gospel, He had given this great witness about Himself. Furthermore, He had done the great works in the name of His Father, and all these works bore witness of Him. In spite of it all they were unbelievers and had rejected His own words and the witness of the Father. The Lord adds, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you." That they were not His sheep was evidenced by their unbelief. The cause of their unbelief was not some kind of an election, which had marked them out before they ever were born, to be excluded from the flock the Shepherd came to gather; but it was their unbelief which was the cause of not becoming His sheep.

Then once more He speaks of "His sheep." The character of sheep as illustrating a believer in Christ has often been pointed out. Sheep are helpless and much dependent on the shepherd; they are harmless, weak and foolish, and more than any animal they lose their way and go astray. Such we are, every child of God will gladly acknowledge. But we are *His* sheep, for whom He died, and He keeps and guards, protects and shields, feeds and guides His sheep, because they are His property. They hear His voice and follow Him.

Full of comfort to all His sheep are His words of gracious assurance. His sheep shall never perish. The eternal life they possess is His gift, the gift of His own power; and that life is His own life. "They shall in no wise perish"; and that for the simple reason "no one shall seize them out of My hand." If those who oppose the doctrine of the perseverance of the Saints, that a believer, a sheep of Christ, can never be lost, would consider that He who uttered these words is the omnipotent Lord in Glory, that He not only died for His sheep to save them, but that He keeps them by His own power, all the unfortunate quibblings of the Arminian theology would end forever. That there are powers which try to wrest the sheep of Christ from Him, the powers of the devil, the flesh and the world, is indicated by the word "pluck" or "seize hold on." Every true sheep of Christ knows this and experiences constantly the conflict with these powers. But what power is greater, the power of sin, of the devil and his demons, of the world, or the power of Him who died, who arose, who is exalted far above all principalities and powers, who has all power in heaven and on earth? There can be but one answer. To say that the power of sin, the devil and the world can snatch away a saved believer, who received eternal life and the Holy Spirit, so that he is lost, is to believe that the power of Christ is insufficient. We quote Bishop J. C. Ryle's helpful words:

"The doctrine plainly taught in this text may be called 'Calvinism' by some, and by others 'a dangerous tendency.' The only question we ought to ask is, whether it is Scriptural. The simplest answer to this question is, that the words of the text, in their plain and obvious meaning, cannot be honestly interpreted in any other way. To thrust in, as some enemies of perserverance do, the qualifying clause, 'they shall never perish *so long as they continue My sheep*,' is adding to Scripture, and taking unwarrantable liberties with the words of Christ.* But let us also note that only

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*Whitby interpreted it: "They shall never perish *through any defect of mine*," though they may fall away by their *own fault*, is a sad instance of unfair handling of Scripture.

'His sheep' shall never perish. The man who boasts that he shall never be cast away and never perish, while he is living in sin, is a miserable self-deceiver. It is the perseverance of the *Saints*, and not of sinners and wicked people, that is promised here. Doubtless the doctrine of the text may be misused and abused, like every other good thing. But to the humble believer, who puts his trust in Christ, it is one of the most glorious and comfortable truths of the Gospel. We are *safe* in Christ, we shall never perish; this is one thing; but to *feel* that we are safe is quite another. Many true believers who *are safe* do not realize and feel it." But more than that, we are not only His sheep, but we are the gift of the Father to the Son, and the Father is greater than all. To believe that the sheep of Christ, given to Him by the Father, can be plucked out of the Father's hand, is miserable unbelief.

" 'My Father who hath given to Me is greater than all, and no one is able to seize out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one.' Here we rise to that height of holy love and infinite power, of which no one could speak but the Son; and He speaks of the secrets of the Godhead with the intimate familiarity proper to the Only Begotten who is in the bosom of the Father. He needed none to testify of man, for He knew what was in man, being Himself God; and He knew what was in God for the self-same reason. Heaven or earth, time or eternity, make no difference. Not a creature is unapparent before Him, but all things are naked and bare in His eyes. And He declares that the Father, who had made the gift, resists all that can threaten harm, and as He has given to Christ, so He is greater than all, and none can seize out of His hand. Indeed the Father and the Son are one, not one Person, but one thing, one Divine nature or essence. The lowliest of men, the Shepherd of the sheep, is the Son of the Father, the true God and the eternal life. And He and the Father are not more truly one in Divine essence than in the fellowship of Divine love for the sheep."*

"I and the Father are one." This one matchless statement silences forever Arianism, Unitarianism, Russellism and other perverters of the essential Deity of our Lord. Then for the third time the Jews took up stones to stone Him. As Augustinus remarks on this incident: "Behold the Jews understood what the Arians do not understand." And another ancient commentator declares: "These stones cry out against the Unitarian."

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*Wm. Kelly.

Verses 32-42. The third time they had tried to stone Him. Many hands had reached down to the ground and picked up a convenient stone; they were ready to stone Him. Behind this new attempt stood the murderer from the beginning, Satan. All along for 4,000 years this fallen being had tried to frustrate God's plan in redemption, and, knowing that these purposes of redemption centered in the promised Redeemer, the Son of God, Satan aimed at Him. Beginning with the first fratricide when Cain slew Abel, to the cold-blooded murder of the little boys in Bethlehem, when the promised child had been born, he attempted to make impossible the work of redemption. Yet he failed continually. And here Satan made another attempt. Yet they were unable to cast a single stone. Surrounded by the howling mob which cried "Stone Him!" as they cried later "Crucify Him!", He is the picture of majestic calmness. He rebukes them. He appeals to the great works, the miracles of divine power He had done. These were the evidences of His Messiahship. They showed that He is God, one with the Father. Was there anything in these works He had shown them from His Father, which required such an action which they were about to execute when they picked up stones? "For which of these works do ye stone Me?" But they were ready with an answer. The logic of His words was at once recognized by these shrewd assassins.

"The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy, and that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God." Thus they had to bear once more a witness that all His works were good, that what He did was not evil, but good and righteous. What galled them was His repeated witness that He is God, one with the Father. They had not forgotten what His lips had spoken when the lame man had been healed by Him, when they realized that He claimed God as His Father, thus making Himself equal with God (John v:18). It shows clearly that the Jews in our Lord's time attached a much higher and deeper sense to our Lord's frequently used language about God being His Father than modern readers are apt to do. In fact they regarded it as nothing less than a claim to equality with God. Modern Arians and Socinians (that is, Unitarians, Christian Scientists and the Russellites), who profess to see nothing in our Lord's sonship but a higher degree of that relationship which exists between all believers and God, would do well to mark this verse. What they say they cannot see, the Jews, who hated Christ, did see. "That 'contemporaneous exposition,' to use a legal phrase, of our Lord's words, deserves great respect, and carries with it great weight and authority. As a man, our Lord was a Jew, educated and trained among Jews. Common sense points out, that the Jews, who lived in His time, were more likely to put correct sense on His words than he modern deniers of His Deity."*

Their answer charging Him with blasphemy contains the claim that they stood up in honor for God, and that they defended Him against this man. If this were true, God, because He is righteous, would have had to reward them for their holy zeal in rejecting a blasphemer. But instead of receiving a reward after they had rejected the Lord Jesus and delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles, God had their city burned, the temple, of which they boasted, destroyed, and the whole nation was dispersed among all nations. The subsequent history of the Jewish people, a history of blood and tears, is a witness that He whom they hated without a cause, whose works they saw, whose words they heard, was and is the Son of God, one with the Father, and not a blasphemer. Every generation of Jews since that day when they condemned the Lord of Glory, sharing by unbelief in this rejection, has borne witness through sufferings untold, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

He answers the awful charge by the Scriptures. In the eighty-second Psalm is a little statement, which He in His infinite wisdom selects to show them their fatal error. They had said, "Thou being a Man makest Thyself God." In that Psalm it is written, "I said ye are gods." Asaph, who penned these words by the Spirit of God, speaks of those whom God had put in places of authority among His people, such as kings, priests and rulers, as being gods. The same fact is stated in Exod. vii:1: "And the Lord said unto Moses. See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh." He was to act in the place of God towards the Egyptian king. Kings, judges and rulers derive their power from God and act thus under His authority; therefore they are called "gods." Then the Lord applied this brief Scripture statement: "If he called them gods, unto whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" The writer of the Psalm by the Spirit of God called others gods, to whom the Word of God came, that is, who were commissioned by God to act in rulership, why, then, did they call Him, whom the Father had set apart and appointed and finally sent into the world, a blasphemer, because He claimed to be the Son of God? The argument is perfect. Nor must we overlook that brief statement, "the Scripture cannot be broken." He thus bears witness to the inspiration and authority of every word in the original text of the Bible. Every word is of God and it cannot be set aside.

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*Expository Thoughts on John.

Again He appeals to His works. If they were not the works of the Father, they should not believe Him. But all His works were of the Father, of which they must have been convinced. And if He does the works of the Father, though they believed not His words, they ought to believe the evidence of His works and thereby believe that the Father must be in Him and He in the Father. But this plain statement following His great argument only stirred up their Satanic hatred and opposition. A great tumult must have followed. Perhaps many hands were stretched out to catch Him, to lay hold on Him, to arrest Him and through murder make an end of His ministry. "But He escaped out of their hand." This was done in a miraculous way; no other explanation is possible. Here is the seeth-ing mob, Satanically energized, ready to tear Him to pieces. They rush upon Him, but suddenly He is gone. We do not know how the escape was effected. He may have become invisible; or their eyes may have been suddenly blinded. How it was we do not know; but it was a miracle, and demonstarated once more the fact that His life could not be touched; He alone had the power to lay it down and to take it again. Once more it is true, "His hour had not yet come."

He is seen next beyond Jordan in the place where John had first baptized. There He abode. It was at this place where He began His blessed ministry about three years ago (John i:28). There He had been proclaimed by the lips which were silent now, as the Lamb of God. And as His ministry was about to end He returned to the same place. There He abode awaiting now the time when He would offer Himself as the Lamb of God.

A great gathering then took place—"many resorted unto Him." They remembered John the Baptist. They remembered well the words which the great herald of the King had spoken. He himself did no miracles. But while John worked no miracles, what he had spoken about Him, who had gone into Jordan to be baptized, had become true. The result was "that many believed on Him there." How they believed, whether only convinced in their minds that He is the Messiah, or whether they believed on Him as the Son of God and as Saviour, no one can tell. Perhaps the many who resorted to Him and believed on Him, belonged to those who on the day of Pentecost were saved.

CHAPTER XI

Verses 1–6. Another great chapter, one of the greatest in the four Gospels, is now before us. The miracle it records is nowhere else given. What is written in connection with it reveals Him, who had borne such a great witness concerning Himself, in all His glory. Here we find the fullest demonstration of His Divine power as well as of His loving sympathy. His heart of love, the love which passeth knowledge, is blessedly revealed in the record of this chapter. He had claimed the same power with the Father to raise the dead, and now He manifests that power. While on the one hand He is seen as God in raising Lazarus from the dead, on the other hand we see Him as very Man, for He wept. The great miracle is introduced here by the Spirit of God to supply the incontrovertible proof that all He had spoken concerning Himself is true, and to give to the Jews the evidence that He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

The sickness of Lazarus of Bethany is at once mentioned in the opening verse. Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha of Bethany, and he is introduced here for the first time. His name is the same as the Hebrew name Eleazer, which means "God is help." Different guesses have been made as to his identity, but we know nothing beyond what is stated of him in this chapter. That he was well to do and widely known may be learned from the large number of Jews who attended his funeral, who had come to mourn for him and were subsequently the witnesses of his resurrection.

Lazarus was sick. The Lord loved Lazarus, yet He who is omnipotent permitted him to be sick. In our own days men and women who pose as healers make the strange assertion that sickness among the children of God is an evidence of their disobedience, or their sins, and, therefore, something by which the Lord expresses His displeasure. They say that a believer who is sick must have done something which is wrong and that bodily sickness is the result of it. All these strange theories are disproven by Scripture. The Lord loved Lazarus, and with all His love He did not prevent his illness.

Beautiful is the action and the example of the two believing sisters, Mary and Martha. They sent a messenger to Him with the message, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." They turned at once to the Lord to acquaint Him with what had befallen the beloved brother. No doubt they had a physician, too, and used means, but immediately they dispatched the messenger. This is still our great privilege, to go to the Lord first in case of sickness and other troubles. We can do what Hezekiah did when he went into the house of the Lord and spread Sennacherib's letter before the Lord (2 Kings xix:14).

And the message they sent was not a demand, not a prayer that Lazarus should be healed at once, as the centurion's servant was healed, by the speaking of a word. How different this is from the divine healers who "demand" and who think that "demanding" is real faith. It was the highest faith when the two sisters thus turned to the Lord, acquainted Him with the fact that Lazarus was sick and then left it in His own hands.

Then the Lord gave the messengers the answer. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." These words of our Lord have raised questions. Why did He say that this sickness is not unto death, when Lazarus actually died and was buried? Why did He not say in plainer words, he will die and I shall raise him up from the dead? When our Lord said that his sickness was not unto death, He must have meant death in its complete form, including the complete dissolution of the body, when it returns to dust. This did not happen to Lazarus. The second part of this verse anticipates Lazarus's death, for by his resurrection the Son of God was glorified.

Then His love for Martha and her sister is stated. Attention must be called to the fact of how the Spirit of God guards this statement in the original text. In the third verse we read the word "love" in connection with the brother of the sisters. The word used in verse 3 is expressive of love as the supreme affection, the same word which is used in John iii:16. But here the word "love" is a different one, inferior to its meaning as the word used in the third verse.

But how strange that after the information of the sickness of Lazarus was imparted unto Him, that He abode two days in the same place where He was! Of course the omniscient One knew what would happen. He knew what great work He was to accomplish, that Lazarus would die. Well, said Chrysostom in his comment, "Christ tarried that none might be able to assert that He restored Lazarus when not yet dead, saying it was lethargy, a fainting, a fit, but not death. He therefore tarried so long that corruption began."

But what soul agony the sisters must have passed through when He did not come at once! They saw their beloved brother getting weaker and weaker and finally he passed away. It was a supreme test of faith. Perhaps they remembered Job's word "though He slay me yet will I trust." What perplexity theirs must have been! Yet they trusted. How beautifully they met it all will be seen later when we read the words of Martha when she met Him.

Verses 7–16. Then He told His disciples, when the two days were gone, that He would go back to Judea. They were astonished and could hardly believe that He would return to Judea, where the Jews had threatened to stone Him. He answered their objections and fears. His working hours had not yet expired. They could not touch His life. His hour had not yet come, hence there was no possibility that they could kill Him. As a man walking in the daylight stumbleth not, because in the sunlight he sees the road before himself, so He walked in certainty.

Then He gave them an exhibition of His omniscience. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." He spoke thus, because He knew that Lazarus had died. Death is a sleep out of which there comes an awakening. Well has it been said by a commentator, "Sleeping, in the sense of dying, is only applied to men, because of the hope of resurrection. We read no such thing of brutes." And He called Lazarus "friend"; though he had passed away, Lazarus was still the friend of Christ.

The disciples understood not what He meant. They thought of the natural sleep and supposed it would be a sign of his recovery. And if he is getting well, why should we go at all into Judea? This probably was in their minds. Then the Lord spoke in plain words, "Lazarus is dead."

If the Lord had been in Bethany when Lazarus was ill, He would have porbably healed him at once. Therefore the Lord was glad for the sake of the disciples that He was not there to prevent the death of His friend, for now they were to witness the greatest of all His miracles, for the confirmation of their faith in Him. Then He told them, "but let us go unto him."

It has been suggested, on account of the words of Thomas which follow, that the disciples surmised, because He said, "let us go to him," that He meant He wanted to die, to be with Lazarus. But this is a far-fetched suggestion. When Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him," he expressed his fear that if the Lord returned to Judea He would surely be killed. While much has been said and written about "doubting Thomas," here we behold the fact that his heart was greatly attached to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he expresses the desire to die with Him.

Verses 17–29. Some one has said "There is a grand simplicity about this passage, which may almost be spoiled by human exposition. To comment on it seems like gilding gold, or painting lilies." We shall follow the story in all its majestic simplicity, asking His gracious guidance to write something which will be a help in grasping the many spiritual lessons. The Lord Jesus arrived in Bethany with His disciples, and He found that His friend Lazarus had been put aside into the tomb; he had lain in the grave already four days. He knew, of course, that Lazarus had been put into the grave. He knew all that had taken place. He knew what He would do. Therefore He could afford to take His time and wait with His arrival, until there could be no question about the actual death of Lazarus. Thus the supposition, so commonly used by infidels, that Lazarus was in a trance, is completely silenced. But the infidels in the camp of Christendom go a step further and claim that the miracle never happened at all.

The news that Lazarus had died and been buried, probably the same day he passed away, had brought many Jews to Bethany. They came to comfort the two sisters. Lazarus must have been well known; Simon the leper, who was probably the father of Lazarus and his sisters (Matthew xxvi:6) may have been a rich and influential man. That he is not mentioned in this chapter denotes that he must have died. Besides a great company of Jews from the surrounding country and Jerusalem, there were present the professional mourners (Mark v:38) to carry out what the rabbinical laws demanded at such occasions. All this was ordered by the Lord. The great gathered company was there to sympathize with the mourning sisters, to do what Jewish etiquette demanded; but the Lord had brought them there in His providence that they might be the witnesses to the great miracle He was about to perform. It is not improbable that many of the Jews who came to Bethany had heard our Lord when in His great testimony He claimed to have the power to raise the dead (John v).

The news that "the Prophet of Nazareth," as many called Him, had arrived with His disciples, must have created a big commotion. The good news that He had come reached the home where the sisters were, surrounded by the mourning friends. Both sisters heard that "Jesus is coming" and at once the characteristic temperament of the two is manifested. Here we must consult Luke x:28–43. In this passage we see the Lord entering Bethany, and the record tells us "Martha received Him into her house." No sooner had the divine guest entered but Mary sat at His feet to drink in His words of life. While Martha was distracted with much serving, running hither and thither in preparing for the comfort of the wonderful visitor, Mary let Him serve her by His gracious ministry. And when Martha ventured to rebuke her sister, when she even suggested that the Lord did not care, He answered her saying, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but there is need of one, and Mary has chosen the good part, the which shall not be taken from her." Here Martha shows the same characteristic. She is the same active, hurrying, impatient Martha, rushing forth at once to meet Him. Mary sat still in the house. No doubt she sat there in quiet meditation, thinking of Him, knowing that soon He would be in her presence. What sorrow, anxiety and trial of faith must have exercised the two sisters during the days their beloved brother had been laid aside. And Martha, so anxious, may have had the thought once more—"Lord, dost Thou not care?"; while Mary in confidence must have felt in her soul, "He does all things well."

Martha may have gone to the outskirts of Bethany to meet Him. Martha, however, was not the loser by going at once to Him, for she heard wonderful words from His gracious lips. Mary by sitting still in the house missed His words and the great comfort He imparted to Martha.

The words with which Martha greeted the Lord expressed her faith as well as her great disappointment. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." What a marvelous statement! She knew Him as the Lord of life and power, the great Jehovah. She knew that in His presence death had to flee away. And when today God's Saints fall asleep, we too can say, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died." Some blessed day when He comes again, when His shout will gather the Saints together, to meet Him in the air, there will be no death for His own who live. "Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians xv:51).

Her words have in them faith, disappointment and a suggestion of reproach, as if she meant, if thou hadst only come sooner, my brother would still be here. Her faith is triumphant; her doubts and her reproach give way to perfect confidence in Him. "But I know—not I hope—that even now, now when my brother has lain four days in the grave, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." Like Abraham, in this hour of extremity and human impossibility, "against hope, believed in hope" (Romans iv:18) she also hoped in Him, who has the power to raise the dead.

But at the same time, swept by different emotions she lowered His dignity. Through her tears she did not see Him clearly, whom she addresses as Lord. Her words mean that she looked upon Him as destitute of independent power, as if He needed to get the insurance of the power of God by prayer. Yet He had clearly taught that the Father's power is His power (John v:21). And He answers her at once with a definite promise—"Thy brother shall rise again." But did Martha realize what He meant? His disciples, if they heard these words spoken must have understood what He meant, for He had told them, "I go that I may wake him out of sleep." Her answer shows that she did not think of an immediate resurrection. She expressed her faith, and that faith was according to her knowledge in believing the Old Testament Scriptures. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." The orthodox Jews believe that all the dead go to Sheol and there await the coming of the Messiah, who would call the righteous dead and bring them back, while the wicked dead would be thrust back into Sheol again. Evidently her answer expresses disappointment. The last day for her was a far-away event; it seemed to have little comfort for her in the present sorrow.

There came from the lips of the Son of God the never-to-be forgotten words, words which have been for all generations of Christians, for a countless multitude, the words of hope, comfort, peace and glorious assurance. "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me shall never die."

Who is able to comment on these blessed words in a satisfactory way. Like all the words of eternal life which came from Him, these words are inexhaustible. He speaks of Himself as the resurrection and the life. Let us note that He puts resurrection before life. True He is the life as He is the light of men (See John i). When He puts resurrection first it must have been in anticipation of His death. He speaks once more of Himself as the "I Am," the Jehovah. Well it is to put alongside of His words here, the words which He spoke to John in the Isle of Patmos, "Fear not! I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And have the keys of hades and of death" (Revelation i:18). I am the resurrection and the life! No prophet before Him, though some of them raised the dead, spoke like this. No prophet could even have conceived such a statement. It is unique and one of the strongest arguments for the Deity of our Lord. He who spoke these words is the eternal Jehovah, the source and spring of all life. And He passed through death, as He said to John, "and was dead"; thus the power of death was annulled and He is the resurrection and the life for all who believe in Him.

Some have explained the words "he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," as meaning the same as John v:26, that is the spiritually dead. While it is perfectly true that the spiritually dead, hearing His voice and believing on Him live, in this passage it cannot possibly mean the dead sinners, but it means the physically dead. Those who have believed on Him have life; they are one with Him. If the believer lays down his body, like Lazarus did, he shall live, as surely as He liveth who died for our sins and conquered death and the grave. And when our Lord adds, "And whosever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die" He gives assurance that for those who believe on Him and live in that coming day, when the righteous dead shall hear in their graves the voice of the Son of God, that the living believers will not see death. The great statement of our Lord at this occasion is an anticipation of the fuller revelation which He gave to the Apostle Paul, when he penned his first epistle. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians iv:16-17).

Here in John xi:25, 26 we have the two classes likewise. Those who have died in Him and who will be raised from among the dead; and those who remain till He comes and who will be exempt from physical death. In that glorious day of His coming, the truth that He is the resurrection and the life will be fully demonstrated. The Lord asked Martha, "Believest thou this?" Her answer was one of faith, though she did not, and could not fully understand the words He had spoken to her. "Yea Lord, I believe (more literally: I have believed and do believe) that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." It is as great, if not greater, than Peter's confession of Him. She believed that He is the promised Messiah, the Son of David; that He is the Son of God and that He came into the world, to be the Redeemer, the Saviour-King.

Then she thought of her sister. The message she whispered to Mary was that He had come and called for her. Mary then arose quickly. It was the Lord's call which stirred her at once and she came to Him.

Verses 30-37. We learn next that all that had taken place between the Lord and Martha happened outside of the Bethany village. When Mary so suddenly arose, the Jews which were also in the house with her, to comfort her, thought she was going to the grave to weep there, and the whole company followed her outside. Evidently they did not hear Martha's message to Mary, for it was given to her secretly. They followed Mary; but they were to meet another to be the witnesses of His power and glory.

Then followed the meeting. As soon as Mary saw Him she fell down at His feet; her sister had not done so. Three times we see Mary at the feet of the Lord Jesus. She sat at His feet and listened to His words; in this she owned Him as Prophet. Here she falls at His feet craving His sympathy; she acknowledged Him as Priest. Once more we see her at His feet when she anointed Him; she did it for His burial (xii:3-7). And falling at His feet, as she did here, in the presence of the company of Jews, was a testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ; she acknowledged Him openly as her Lord in this act of worship. Mary then repeated the same words which Martha had addressed to Him, but she does not say all Martha had spoken. She said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother would not have died" and then she stopped. Perhaps her voice was choked with tears; she could not utter another word. Martha had not wept at His feet. And when Mary was weeping, the accompanying Jews were so touched by her grief, that they also wept. The word used here for "weeping" has the meaning of "loud lamenting." When later the weeping of our Lord is recorded an entirely different word is used.

Then our Lord became deeply stirred as He looked upon the lamenting sister, and the Jews who wailed with her. He is touched with the feeling of their sorrow and infirmity, thus revealing His true humanity. He was greatly agitated, so that He groaned in spirit; His whole soul was moved in compassion and was troubled, or, as the marginal reading gives it, "He troubled Himself." Perhaps the latter was the outward expression in His face of the inward emotion, which gave way to His blessed tears.

"Let us carefully remark that our Lord never changes. He did not leave behind Him His human nature when He ascended up into heaven. At this moment at God's right hand, He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and can understand tears as well as ever. Our great High-priest is the very friend that our souls need, able to save as God, able to feel as man. To talk of the Virgin Mary feeling for sinners more than Jesus is to utter that which is ignorant and blasphemous. To teach that we can need any other priest, when Jesus is such a feeling Saviour, is to teach what is senseless and absurd."*

Then the Lord asked them, "Where have ye laid him?" They said unto Him, "Lord, come and see!" But the question our Lord asked was not to gain information as to the location of the grave. As Quesnel states, "Christ does not ask out of ignorance, any more than God did when He said, 'Adam where art thou?' " Those who answered Him must have been believers for they addressed Him as Lord; perhaps Mary and Martha spoke these words, "Lord, come and see." Then His tears could not be restrained any longer. "Jesus wept." What a wonderful sentence this is! It shows once more the real humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. As stated before, the word for weeping is a different one than that used in connection with Mary and the Jews. The word here (*dakruo*) means a silent weeping, the shedding of tears. The former word (*klaio*) the loud lamenting, is the one employed to describe the weeping of Christ over Jerusalem, when He beheld the city (Luke xix:41). Then He lamented loudly; here as He approached the grave of Lazarus He wept silently. The weeping over Jerusalem was the public lamentation of a prophet; the weeping here was the expression of deepest sympathy with the sorrowful affliction of His friends. Let us remember once more that He is still the same loving, sympathizing Lord. "For we have not a high priest not able to sympathize with our infirmities, but was tempted in all things in like manner, apart from sin" (Hebrews iv:15, correct translation).

The Jews said, "Behold how He loved him!" while others said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

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*Bishop Ryle.

They were touched with His loving sympathy. But even here they sneer at Him. They remember the blind man He had healed in Jerusalem. Why then, they say sarcastically, did He not prevent this man from dying?

Verses 38-46. Then once more He groaned in Himself as He came to the grave, which was a cave closed up with a stone. This cave was a kind of a horizontal chamber hewn in a rock. These burial places used by the Jews were sometimes natural caves (See Genesis xxiii:9); others were artificially hollowed out from a rock (Isaiah xxii:16; Matthew xxvii:60), in a garden (John xix:41) or in some field (Genesis xxxv; 1 Kings ii:34).

What a moment it must have been when He commanded "Take ye away the stone!" He could have spoken the word and by His omnipotent power the stone would have rolled away, like the stone which sealed His own grave. But He said, "Take ye away the stone." This command impressed the assembled witnesses with the reality and truth of this great miracle about to be performed. They knew in this cave four days ago the body of Lazarus was laid. There his body rests. Perhaps some of the men had assisted in putting the stone over the mouth of the cave. And now they were to open the tomb. What witnesses they made to attest the miracle which had been performed!

Then we hear the voice of unbelief. Martha said unto Him, "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he has been dead four days." Yet while she spoke this she confirmed the indisputable fact of the death of her brother Lazarus. She would never have spoken like this if she had not been fully convinced that her brother had died. Perhaps he expired in her arms. Her unbelieving utterance was used as a link in the chain of evidence which makes the miracle of Lazarus's resurrection unimpeachable. There could be no deception. Martha had not the remotest thought of what the Lord was about to do. She did not think, nor expect, that the Lord would raise him from the dead. Some infidels have suggested that the whole incident can be explained by self-deception, if not by imposture, but Martha's words make these infidels' claims look ridiculous. When she said "he stinketh" she referred to that which was perfectly natural and true, for a dead body in a tropical climate becomes the subject of decomposition in a very short time. There can be no question that the stench of corruption came from the cave, when the stone was removed. Martha knew it and she shrank from having the stone taken away, for she did not believe that the Lord could bring her brother back to life out of such a state. She did not remember that He who commanded "take ye away the stone" was the omnipotent Lord, the creator of all things, who has the power over life and death, with whom there is nothing impossible. In the traditional belief of orthodox Jews is held a theory which may shed light on the four days; why the Lord permitted Lazarus to remain buried not for three days, but four days. The tradition asserts the following: after a person dies, the spirit of the dead person lingers about the burial place, waiting to see if there might be a chance to return to the body. But when the countenance changes, and the signs of decomposition appear, then the spirit disappears and goes to its place. Therefore orthodox Jews did not certify the actuality of death till three days were gone, for they said then the countenance changes and after the third day the spirit of the deceased leaves the sepulchre and there in no hope of the dead coming back to life. Now this is a tradition only, but if it was held by the Jews in the days of our Lord, as it probably was, it may explain the reason why Lazarus was not raised on the third day, but on the fourth.

And He answered her unbelieving words in a gracious manner. "Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldest believe, that thou shouldest see the glory of God?" He must have referred to the message which He had sent to the sisters before He came (see Verse 4). He tells her that if she would believe she would see the glory of God. But with the Jew it has always been seeing first and after seeing believing (John xx:29). It is faith in Him which makes possible the manifestation of the glory of God. We doubt not that His gracious word kindled that faith in her and she believed, so that the mist of unbelief and uncertainty was scattered.

The command He gave is obeyed. Obedience to it had been delayed by Martha's unbelieving interruption; but His answer was the signal to the men who had started to remove the stone to finish the task. The mouth of the cave is uncovered. Looking in they all must have seen the corpse in its grave-clothes. What a wonderful moment it must have been! No painter could ever picture this great scene; no pen is able to describe the agitation, the emotions and the thrill of all these eye witnesses. Here He stands in blessed, undisturbed calmness. Perhaps on either side were the two sisters, both looking, not towards the mouth of the cave, but they must have looked into His face. There was no more doubt in their faces. They believed. A little further back the many Jews; their faces must have revealed intense expectation, curiosity and astonishment.

A few moments of silence and then we hear His voice. His eyes were lifted up to heaven and He said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I know that Thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me." All along in His self-witness as recorded in this Gospel, He spoke of His oneness with the Father and that the Father had sent Him. Once more He bears witness to the fact in the presence of those who had heard Him speak such words before. He addresses the unseen One, whom He knows and sees, Father. What He speaks in their hearing is for the sake of the assembled company "that they may believe that Thou hast sent me." His words begin not with a petition, as prophets do, but with giving thanks. One would have expected prayer for the manifestation of God's power at this thrilling moment. "Father, I thank Thee that Thou has heard me." It has been suggested that He must have prayed to the Father since He knew that Lazarus had died. But this can hardly be the right view. The next sentence gives us the true meaning. "I know that Thou hearest me always." Here is His assurance, knowing as He did beforehand, that He has already what He would ask. He knew His prayer was answered before it ever was uttered. Chrysostom said on this passage, "Who ever prayed in this manner? Before uttering any prayer, He said, I thank Thee, showing that He needed not prayer." And because His request was granted before it was made, He gave thanks unto the Father. It shows forth again His oneness with the

Father. And He expressed Himself thus publicly for those who surrounded Him, so that they might be convinced and believe, that He acted with the Father and never without Him, even as He had said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (v:19). His words spoken in their presence were an evidence that He is the Christ, the One whom the Father had sent, and who was about to do what the Father doeth—"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will."

Then came the supreme moment. He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth!" What a shout it must have been! And the loud voice which was heard here before the open tomb in which Lazarus's body rested, will be heard again. Again He will speak with the commanding shout, another majestic "Come forth." For the Lord Himself shall descend out of heaven with a shout (I Thess. iv:16). Then the graves of the dead in Christ will be opened; corruption will put on incorruption; and we, the living ones, shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; this mortal will put on immortality. The loud cry "Come forth" was the word of omnipotent power.

And how the many eyes of all must have been riveted on the opening of the cave! How they must have been almost breathless as that loud voice reached their ears! What a hush of expectation! And all at once out of the darkness of the cave there looms up the white figure. Slowly that figure moves towards the entrance, and now every eye sees that it is Lazarus. "He that was dead came forth!" Encumbered by the grave-clothes, Lazarus, brought back to life, was tottering towards the daylight. He comes forth, the mighty witness to the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, a witness to all the Lord Jesus Christ had spoken, the attesting seal that His Word is true. Here is the witness to the greatness of His power; the power over death. But Lazarus came forth "bound hand and foot with the grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go." There is no difficulty here, as some have imagined. They say, "how could Lazarus have come forth out of the grave, if hands and feet were bound by a winding sheet of linen?" But the custom of the Jews was to wrap the dead comparatively loosely in the linen sheet. Around the jaw, to prevent the falling of the lower jaw, was tightly bound a napkin. These grave-clothes and the napkin also bore their witness that Lazarus had actually died. And there he stood in the portal of the cave. Life had been given by Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. But he needed something else. The grave-clothes and the napkin had to be removed; he had to be set at liberty, so that he could walk about and breathe. He could not do it for himself for neither his hands nor his feet were free. He might have spoken one word and the hindering objects would have dropped from the body of Lazarus. He called on them to do it. It aroused them from their great astonishment and for all we know the very men who had wound the body of Lazarus in the grave clothes and bound the napkin over his face, were the men who now loosed him from the bondage.

The greatest miracle had taken place. All He had claimed in His great self-witness (Chapter v) was now confirmed; what He spoke is the Truth. But in that great chapter He speaks of both, the spiritually dead and the physically dead. Both, He tells us, will hear the voice of the Son of God. The resurrection of Lazarus therefore has a typical meaning; it gives a picture of what the Lord of Life does for the spiritually dead. Lazarus dead and buried, in the darkness of the grave, in corruption, is a picture of the natural man. He is dead in trespasses and sin; he is in darkness and all his works are but corruption, filthy rags, obnoxious to the holy and righteous God. What man needs is life. He cannot give it to himself. He is as helpless to raise himself up, as Lazarus was, shut up in the cave. Nor can the dead raise the dead. No one in that company could do anything for Lazarus; they were as helpless as the dead man was in the grave. Only One could give life and that is He who is "the resurrection and the life." He spoke the word of life, "Come forth!" Resurrection-life then followed at once. And thus it is with the spiritually dead. Those who hear His voice, who believe on Him, receive life through Him and in Him, the resurrection-life, eternal life (John v:24). Whenever the spiritual resurrection of a lost sinner takes place it is a miracle.

But Lazurus needed liberty, freedom from the bondage of the grave. The unloosing of the grave-clothes was the condition of the exercise of the life which had been given to him. If the grave-clothes had not been taken away he would have sunk back into the tomb. And so the Lord Jesus Christ delivers from the grave-clothes, the grave-clothes of Judaism, that which is of the law, the insignia of death and not of life. Free from the law, is the happy state of the sinner who has been quickened and raised up, saved by grace. And in Christ the believer has perfect liberty. The grave clothes are gone. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians v:1). And in that life there is deliverance from more than the bondage of the law, there is deliverance also from the bondage, the dominion of sin. In making known this liberty He uses His gifts, the teachers of His Word, as He used the men who stood at the tomb of Lazarus to loose him, so that he could walk in perfect liberty.

The effect of the great miracle was that many of the Jews believed on Him. What else could they do as they beheld the startling evidence that He is the Christ, the Son of God. Perhaps many of them were among the converts on the day of Pentecost. But what about the sisters? We hear nothing in the record about them at this occasion. Well can we imagine how both of them must have fallen at His feet in adoration and worship, while afterward they embraced the beloved brother. But His enemies, under satanic blindness, went to the then plotting Pharisees to give a report of what had taken place. We add some remarks on this great miracle from "Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of John."

"We should observe that we are not told of anything that Lazarus said about his state while in the grave, and nothing of his after history. Tradition says that he lived for thirty years after, and was never known to smile; but this is probably a mere apocryphal invention. As to his silence, we can easily see there is a Divine wisdom about it. If St. Paul "could not utter" the things that he saw in the third heaven, and called them 'unspeakable things'; it is not strange that Lazarus should say nothing of what he saw in Paradise (2 Cor. xii:4). But there may be always seen in Scripture a striking silence about the feelings of men and women who have been the subjects of remarkable Divine interposition. God's ways are not man's ways. Man loves sensation and excitement, and likes to make God's work on his fellow-creatures a gazing-stock and a show, to their great damage. God almost always seems to withdraw them from the public, both for their own good and His glory.

"We should observe that we are told nothing of the feelings of Martha and Mary, after they saw their brother raised to life. The veil is drawn over their joy, though it was not over their sorrow. Affliction is a more profitable study than rejoicing.

"We should observe lastly that the raising of Lazarus is one of the most signal instances in the Gospels of Christ's Divine power. To Him who could work such a miracle nothing is impossible. He can raise from the death of sin any dead soul, however far gone and corrupt. He will raise us from the grave at His own second appearing. The voice which called Lazarus from the tomb is almighty. 'The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they that hear shall live' (John v:25)."

Before we follow the last portion of this great chapter a few statements as to the objections and inventions of infidelity might be in order. We mention first the worst form of infidelity, which goes by the name of "modern Biblical scholarship," the camouflaged title of that system which is in the fullest sense of the word "destructive," for it destroys everything in the line of true faith. To show what this miserable criticism teaches we quote first from an article on Lazarus in the Standard Bible Dictionary, written by Professor Samuel Dickey of the *McCormick Theological Seminary* (Presbyterian), of Chicago, Ills. He says the following:

"The problem is inseparably connected with the larger one of the authorship and historicity of the fourth Gospel. Those who believe this Gospel to be purely allegorical fiction(!) take the story of Lazarus to be a free composition out of elements drawn from the Synoptic Gospels . . . It is more usual, however, today to admit that there are many trustworthy data underlying the accounts of the fourth Gospel, and that it is not to be considered, therefore, simply a religious and dogmatic allegory. In that case the story of Lazarus *may* contain trustworthy elements, even though it may be difficult to determine just how much is due to modification and interpretation of the fact in the mind of the Evangelist. Obviously it is very difficult to explain the absolute silence of the Synoptic Gospels regarding Lazarus, containing reference as they do to the two sisters and an anointing in Bethany, even though we freely admit the partial character of the sources of these Gospels. Such an event with such consequences as are described in the fourth Gospel could hardly escape notice. There are also certain details in the narrative which, as they stand at least, strike us incongruous. Yet, on the other hand, it is perhaps more difficult, once the hypothesis of pure allegory is abandoned, to psychologically explain the story's composition as an ideal construction by the Evangelist to illustrate his views of Christ as "the resurrection and the life." It is too stupendous for any personal follower of Jesus, at least, to have simply invented it. *Some* historical foundation is required, and the underlying facts, whatever they are, *may* therefore belong to that body of trustworthy information regarding a ministry of Jesus in Judea which appears to have been known to the author of the fourth Gospel alone. *Assuming* this to be true, and that our philosophical attitude to the miraculous does not preclude its possibility, the resurrection of Lazarus *may have occurred*, and the words, "I am the resurrection and the life" have had, therefore, more than a spiritual significance."

We have put certain words in this article in italics. Here is a Critic who tries to make it appear that he is orthodox. He is one of those who occupy the convenient place on the fence. But when he writes of the possibility that "the resurrection of Lazarus may have occurred" he shows that he has no faith in inspiration. It is the language of doubt and uncertainty. A believer in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures does not use such language.

We quote next from one who is more outspoken, who does not grant the possibility that the resurrection of Lazarus may have occurred. Before us is the large volume of "The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate, by Dr. Benjamin W. Bacon Buckingham, Professor on New Testament Criticism in Yale University."

We quote from pages 348 and 349 the following:

"The Christian world instinctively and rightly turns to Jesus' tender expostulations with Martha's tears, and with the timid suggestion of both sisters that a miracle should be wrought to alleviate their individual sorrow, these are among the loftiest and purest expressions of Christian faith in face of bereavement. *But we do injustice to this Gospel when we try to force it to our demand for the 'historical.' It is not historical, but 'spiritual.' The story of the Raising of Lazarus, absolutely excluded as it is by Synoptic tradition, should suffice of itself alone to settle this point once for all.*"

Here we have it. The story of Lazarus's resurrection is not historical. All that is written in the eleventh chapter of John's Gospel never occurred. It is an invention of the author of the fourth Gospel, whoever he may be. This view is now taught in many of the leading theological seminaries, like Union, Chicago, Boston, etc. It is infidelity pure and simple. The critical statements of these "scholars" do not reveal "maturity" but "blindness." If they had just a little bit of the knowledge which every child of God possesses, the knowledge imparted not by human intelligence, but by the Spirit of God, they would not write such foolishness. If the Synoptics did not mention the resurrection of Lazarus it was thus ordered by the divine Author of their documents, the Holy Spirit. He reserved the record of this miracle for the pen of the Apostle John, into whose Gospel it properly belongs.

The infidel-critical view then is this. The story was created by the writer of the Gospel for the purpose of illustrating the truth that Christ is the resurrection and the life, and that it was perhaps developed by him out of some conversation of Jesus, or perhaps out of the story of Lazarus and the rich man, possibly out of some incident in the life of Lazarus. They even suggest that Nain is an abbreviation of

Bethany, and that the narratives of the resurrection of Lazarus and the widow's son have a common origin, etc. The denials of Destructive Criticism may be reduced to these three propositions: (1) John did not write this account at all. (2) The author of the Gospel of John invented the story, building it on a very slight foundation. (3) That it may be truth that Lazarus had been sick, but that the whole story was a fraud perpetrated by Lazarus and the sisters. Such is the infidelity in the camp of Christendom today. It deserves the most scathing denunciation and every true Christian should turn from it with abhorrence. The French infidel Renan held the same view as some of the Critics hold, perhaps they stole it from him. Renan declared that the death of Lazarus was only apparent; that the supposed resurrection was a fraud contrived by the friends of Jesus in order to give *eclat* to His anticipated entrance into Jerusalem, and that to this fraud He lent himself, in a moment of intense fanatical enthusiasm.

All these French, German and Theological Seminary infidels try to dispose of the reality of this miracle. We quote a simple, yet masterly answer to all their objections. The author of this defense we shall name after the quotation.

"The only alternative is belief in the miracle. The evidence of John's authorship of the fourth Gospel refutes the hypothesis that John did not write the account. The narrative itself is neither ideal nor dogmatic, neither an artistic picture nor a concealed argument. It is a perfectly colorless narrative of events concerning which there was no possible room for mistake. The writer does not draw from the narrative any conclusion; he does not say that any miracle was wrought or even that the dead was raised. He simply tells his readers what he saw and heard, and leaves them to draw their own conclusions. He was with Jesus beyond the Jordan; word came to them that Lazarus was sick; Jesus remained where He was two days; then He told the disciples that Lazarus was dead; when they reached Bethany they found a scene of mourning; the friends had come, according to Jewish custom, to console the sisters' family; both sisters stated impliedly and reproachfully that Lazarus was dead when they arrived at the grave, one of them said that he had been dead four days, and that corruption—though this apparently was only her presumption—had already commenced; Christ directed the stone to be taken away, commanded in a loud voice, 'Lazarus come forth,' and he came fourth bound in his grave-clothes. A scientific commission could not have reported the facts with more absolute impartiality. The writer expresses no opinion whatever respecting the occurrence. This is not the method of an idealist who has invented the occurrence for the purpose of glorifying his Master, or of a dogmatic who has written it to prove a doctrine; it is the language of a pre-eminently honest, fair-minded and impartial witness. And upon this narrative the great mass of readers and students have come to but one conclusion—that to which both friend and foe came at that time—that it was a genuine resurrection from the dead, a great and notable miracle."

The author of this fine piece of logic in answer to the destructive infidels is **Dr. Lyman Abbot,** late editor of the "Outlook." It is quoted from page 148 of his commentary on the Gospel of John, published in New York City fifty years ago. Yet this faith he once held was abandoned by him and for years he has destroyed what he once believed.

We conclude by saying that the great miracle, unimpeachable as to its historicity, is the supreme evidence of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Infidels of every description have acknowledged that such must be the case if the miracle is true. The Jewish philosopher Spinoza, with his pantheistic theory, declared "Could I be persuaded of the truth of the raising of Lazarus, I would have broken into pieces my whole system, and would have embraced without repugnance the ordinary faith of Christians."

Verses 47–57. The great miracle had taken place. The self-witness of our Lord had been crowned by this manifestation of His omnipotence. Many Jews had been witnesses; none of them could deny it. The Sandedrim, the great council, composed of chief priests, great teachers, elders and rulers, is called together. The great question which was raised, is the question, What shall we do about it? Then follows a most startling admission. "This man doeth many miracles." His foes bore united testimony to the fact that He performed many miracles. The miracles He had done as recorded in this Gospel are all coupled with His claims of Messiahship and Deity. His repeated assertions of Oneness with God, who sent Him, were attested by these miracles. If these miracles had not been incontrovertible, if even the slightest uncertainty had been possible, these national leaders of Judaism would never have made such an admission. They did not even submit the question about His miracles. They were indisputable. Yet today the modern Sadducees in their councils, the faculties of seminaries, the boasters of "modern Biblical Scholarship," deny the miracles of Christ, 1900 years after they had been done, when the eye-witnesses declared that He worked many miracles. If these Pharisees and chief priests who saw Christ, saw His miracles, and who left no stone unturned to oppose Him, never dared to even dispute the genuineness of these miracles, it is ridiculously absurd, to deny His miracles now. Great was the satanic blindness of these Jews; greater still and many times worse is the infidelity of the destructive critics in the camp of Christendom.

What shall we do about it? That is their question. If we let Him alone, everybody is going to believe on Him, acknowledge Him as the sent One, the promised Messiah, King-Messiah. Then follows an argument produced by the ignorance of unbelief. Selfishly they feared for their national institution. The Romans, if He should be believed on as the promised King, will take away our place (the temple) and destroy our national existence. They thought that His rejection would insure safety for them; that His acceptance would lead to disaster. But the disaster they feared came upon the temple, Jerusalem and the nation because they condemned Him to death. The cry "His blood be upon us and upon our children" has found its dreadful accomplishment in their history of nineteen hundred years.

One of their number speaks. It is Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. He and his father-in-law, Annas, were Sadducees (Acts v:17). It seems that the Sadducees must have controlled the great council at that time. Caiaphas and Annas both held the office of high priest (Luke iii:2) during the ministry of our Lord and after. That they were in power in the Sanhedrim seems to be confirmed by the sneer of Caiaphas against the statement made by the Pharisees—"Ye know nothing at all, you are ignorant about this whole question," and he continues "nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." He suggests that He be put out of the way for expediency's sake. "It is expedient for us," what a statement this is! Whether He is innocent or not, whether He is our Messiah or not, whether He is God manifested in the flesh or not, for the benefit of the whole nation, but one course is open, He must die. The question of right and law is not in view at all. God was not in their thoughts. He spoke as a clever politician, like the politicians of the world to this day, it was not the question of right with him, but the question of profit.

But there is another side. While Caiaphas acted in wickedness, God nevertheless used him as a mouthpiece to utter a great truth. He used him as an instrument, the same as Balaam, who hated Israel, was used to pronounce Israel's blessedness. He spoke through Caiaphas whose official standing as high priest gave his words official weight and authority. However, Caiaphas was not aware that he was made the mouthpiece of the Spirit of God and that his words were prophetical. He had said in all satanic maliciousness that it would be a very good thing, an expedient thing, that this one man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not. The truth was that "Jesus should die for that nation"; so that the nation might ultimately be saved by the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the Spirit of God had spoken long ago. "For the transgression of My people was He stricken" (Isaiah liii). Being miraculously compelled by the Holy Spirit, Caiaphas spoke the same Isaiah had written over seven hundred years before. And He died for that nation. The day will come when the remnant of Israel will be saved because He died for them. Then they will confess Him in the very words of Isaiah's great vision. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah liii:4–5).

And adds the Spirit of God "Not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." It is written in Ephesians "He loved the church and gave Himself for it." This fact is brought out here in anticipation of the calling of the elect from all nations, the other sheep, to form the Church, His body.

The advice of Caiaphas must have made a deep impression on the majority of the council. If Nicodemus was there, as he probably was, for he belonged to the Sanhedrim, his, and perhaps the objections of others, were speedily silenced. From that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death. To accomplish this needed great caution; with all their wicked endeavors they were great cowards, governed in every detail by self-interest. How many council meetings they held is not reported.

And our omniscient Lord knew all about it. He was not present when Caiaphas advocated His death. He needed not the information of what had taken place to reach Him through friends. He knew their thoughts; He heard their words and therefore He walked no more openly among the Jews. He knew what would follow; He knew when His hour would come, but now He withdrew to a village called Ephraim. There He tarried. Nothing is said of His activity there; no record is given of what He spake and did in Ephraim. From this we may conclude that He spent the time there in fellowship with His Father and in communing with His disciples.

It was now Passover time; the Jews' feast drew near. Large numbers were traveling towards Jerusalem to attend the feast in the holy city. It seems that many of these Jewish worshippers looked for the Lord Jesus. His name was widely known; His great miracles were known to the multitudes. There was a great expectation among them that He would appear at the feast in Jerusalem and manifest still greater glory. So they gathered in groups in the yard of the temple eagerly asking the question, What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?

It seems the plotting enemies of our Lord had reached a definite decision. They knew He had disappeared. No one knew where He lodged. So they had issued orders that if any man knew where He was, to report His hiding place at once, so that they might apprehend Him and carry out their dark counsels. But the Christ was not in their hands. Before He laid down His life voluntarily, before His hour came, He must be presented to Jerusalem as *King* openly.

CHAPTER XII

Verses 1–11. We come now to the final public appearance of our Lord before the Jews of Jerusalem. After this chapter the record of John's Gospel gives us the blessed messages He spoke to His own disciples, which are not reported by the synoptic Gospels. And after they were finished He uttered that matchless prayer before He went to Gethsemane and willingly stretched forth His loving hands to be bound and led away "as a Lamb to the slaughter."

What the other Gospels report that happened on the way to Jerusalem, like the healing of the blind man in Jericho, the incident with Zacchaeus, etc., is all omitted by the Apostle John. We shall not burden our pages with additional objections and questionings of an infidel Bible criticism.

He returned to Bethany. It was His last journey to Jerusalem, as we read in Luke's Gospel. On the way there He informed His disciples what would now soon take place: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated and spit upon. And they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again" (Luke xviii:31–33). Thus He walked along with His disciples in perfect calmness. He knew all the suffering and all the shame which awaited Him in David's city. He set His face like flint in fullest confidence that He would not be ashamed but finish the work the Father gave Him to do and have the victory. (See Isaiah l:6–7). He arrived in Bethany on the eve of the

Sabbath, that is, on Friday afternoon. He spent that last Sabbath with His beloved friends in Bethany; the next Sabbath His body rested in the tomb. Then on the first day of the week, following the Sabbath, He rode into Jerusalem publicly on an ass. In connection with His arrival in Bethany the fact is mentioned that Lazarus was there—"where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He raised from the dead." Ever since Lazarus had been raised from the dead he had dwelt in Bethany as the witness of the omnipotent power of the Christ. That the miracle was widely known, that it was then made known to the Jews, who had come to attend the Passover, may be learned from verse nine; multitudes of Jews came to Bethany to see Lazarus.

"There they made Him a supper." Martha was as busy as ever with serving. She serves now without being cumbered with much serving. Then Lazarus is mentioned as being one of them that sat at the table with Him. Here Lazarus is mentioned for the last time; after this we never hear of him again. We do not know how long he lived, or how he lived. The last record given of him is here, being at the table with Him who had raised him from the dead. This supper in Bethany is a beautiful type of that great coming marriage supper of the Lamb, which will take place in glory (Revelation xix). The Lord Jesus Christ will then meet His own in glory. Lazarus represents those who died and who are raised from among the dead; the sisters Martha and Mary, those who are alive when He comes. There is still another lesson. We have seen how Lazarus, dead, represents the sinner dead in trespasses and sins; his resurrection, the life he receives who believes on him; then followed liberty, "loose him and let him go." Here Lazarus is in fellowship with the Lord, enjoying communion with Him. Life, Liberty and Fellowship—these are the three great facts of the Gospel of Grace.

The great event which happened at this supper was when Mary is at His feet again and anoints them with spikenard, very costly, and then wiped His feet with her hair. It was the expression of her deepest love and gratitude, an act of worship by which she acknowledged Him as Lord. In Matthew and Mark the record tells us that she anointed His head also (Matthew xxvi:6-13; Mark xiv:3-9). In both of these Gospels we hear that the Lord declared wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the whole world, that her deed is to be mentioned; but in John's Gospel the odor of the anointment is mentioned as filling the whole house. These differences are not discrepancies, nor is it necessary, in order to harmonize these differences, to invent several anointings, as some have done. There was but one anointing. She anointed both His head and His feet; John passes over the fact that she anointed His head. It must have been in this wise: she first anointed His head and then sank down at His feet and anointed them as an act of deepest humility, gratitude and worship. Thus alone the act as anticipation of His burial was fully expressed. And Mary of Bethany was not among the women who went to the sepulchre to embalm the body of our Lord; she knew He would rise from among the dead.

Let us also remember that the woman who was a sinner (Luke vii:38) wiped His feet with her hair. Here are no more tears, but all is joy and gladness; Mary brought her alabaster box containing a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, not using just a little, but breaking the alabaster box she emptied it all, for He is worthy of all. What the ointment was, the spikenard, cannot be ascertained; the fact is stated that it was of very great value. Such costly ointments were much used among the ancients and highly prized, but generally a very little was used of it. Perhaps the alabaster box containing the precious ointment was a great treasure of the family. It was the best Mary possessed and she gave it to Him. As we read in 1 Corinthians xi:15, the glory of the woman is her long hair; she put all her glory at His feet to glorify Him. She expressed in this way that Christ was her all; she bore witness to His Deity, and she alone among all His disciples had realized in faith that He was on the way to the cross, that He would die, be buried and rise again. No word was spoken by her, but her silent act of faith, adoration and worship, the savour of it, filled the whole house. It was done unto Him; it magnified Him, His blessed person and His equally blessed work. And sweet to Him was this act of worship, this lavish expression of love. She is the standing pattern of true affection for the Lord Jesus Christ and devotedness unto Him. But that can only be attained by communion with Him, sitting at His feet as Mary did. Such devotedness to Him, exaltation of His ever blessed and worthy Name, is still the sweet savour unto Him and still fills the whole house.

Such devotion Satan hates. He did not let this scene go unchallenged. His voice is heard through one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him. According to Matthew and Mark the other disciples also had indignation, considering the great act of love as wasteful. Judas was the spokesman and the other disciples in their ignorance endorsed his sentiment. Before this our Lord had indicated the character of Judas, who was now about to betray Him. He knew that he had a devil (John vi:64). Judas had no affection for the Lord Jesus Christ, though he was a disciple; he had no affection for Him because he did not believe on Him as Lord, and always called Him, Rabbi. Therefore he did not think of the Lord Jesus. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence (denarii), and given to the poor? It has been calculated that three hundred pence make about fifty dollars; the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas sold Christ make about fifteen dollars. But did he really care for the poor? The omniscient Spirit of God tells us that it was but the cover for a more sordid motive. He was a thief; he carried the bag, and all along covetousness, the love of money, had led him to steal. This gives us an interesting side-light on the poverty of Him, who was rich, and had become poor. The bag was not a portmanteau, but a chest into which voluntary contributions both in coin and in provisions were put by friends, like Joanna, Susanna and many others (Luke viii:3). Thus the Son of God, the Creator of all things, in poverty was maintained, as well as His disciples, by the voluntary contributions of His friends. Judas had charge of all this. Many a nominal Christian uses today the same falsehood Judas used to hide the love of money. They excuse themselves from certain duties, like assisting foreign missionary work. They plead "charity begins at home," that the poor and needy must be helped, but in reality they are covetous and selfish.

"He was a thief." This statement should silence the foolish inventions that Judas was moved by a noble purpose in betraying the Lord Jesus. The theory claims that Judas wanted the Lord Jesus to be King. He thought if He was betrayed and taken captive, He would exercise His divine power, overthrow His enemies and take the throne; thus it is claimed he tried to hasten the Kingship and Kingdom of Christ. He was a thief!

Then the Lord rebuked Judas and vindicated Mary. Her act was prophetic: it foretold His coming death and burial. To help the poor is always possible, for poverty will always exist throughout this age, and He added "but Me ye have not always." He was soon to return to the Father, then His bodily presence would cease. Attention has been rightly called that this one statement of our Lord silences completely the abominable blasphemy of Rome of the Lord's bodily presence in the "Mass."

On that memorable day a large number of Jews came to Bethany; they had heard that He was there, and as the village was near Jerusalem they hurried there to see Him. They also were curious to see Lazarus to convince themselves that he was really alive. The crowds which came must have been very large; the attention of the chief priests was called to it and they at once consulted to put Lazarus to death also. The miracle could not be denied and so they tried to silence the witness. What a confirmation of another word of our Lord as to unbelief: "Neither will they believe though one rose from the dead"!

Many Jews going away from Bethany believed on Jesus, that He is the Messiah. They must have spread their conviction among others so that everywhere it must have been heard, something like this—He is the Messiah, none but the Messiah could raise any one from the dead.

Verses 12–19. A number of times in this Gospel we have learned how our Lord withdrew, disappearing from the multitudes, retiring into the wilderness to be alone; but now He no longer hides Himself. In chapter vi:15 they wanted to make Him King by force, but now He appears voluntarily and presents Himself as the promised King to Jerusalem. This had to be done before He died on the Cross, in fulfillment of the prediction uttered by Zechariah. This fact annihilates completely the invention of a prolific writer who has tried to demonstrate that Christ did not come as King with an offer of the promised kingdom; his theory has sadly miscarried.

The next day mentioned is the day known in Christendom as "Palm Sunday," the beginning of that memorable week in which He died as the substitute of sinners, in which He laid in the grave; the next week begins with the glorious day of resurrection. On that day the 483 prophetic years given in Daniel's great prophecy (Daniel ix) had expired. An immense crowd of people from all over the land had gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover feast. No doubt hundreds, if not thousands had seen Him, heard Him, were fed by Him in the wilderness; and now they were in the City, perhaps eagerly looking for Him. All at once the news sweeps through the crowd—He is coming! He is coming! The vast multitude had heard of the great miracle which had taken place in Bethany. There had been a stream of visitors and probably these brought the news to Jerusalem, He is coming to the feast. Soon a great throng of people gathered and as they went forth on the road they plucked branches from the palm trees to welcome the King. This was an ancient custom in welcoming Kings and victorious generals. The palm branches therefore denote victory; this is the case in the Book of Revelation (vii:9). The palm trees are very prominent also in the description of the Millennial Temple (Ezekiel xl, etc.). Then followed a mighty cry, "Hosanna!" Perhaps this cry came when the crowds beheld Him for the first time, riding upon the ass. Hosanna is taken from the Messianic cxviii Psalm. "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord" (verse 25). It is a cry for salvation. This was followed by another, partial quotation from the same Psalm. "Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." But the words "The King of Israel" are not found in the Psalm. It was added by the people in their enthusiasm in welcoming Him, whom many believed to be the promised Messiah. In Matthew's Gospel, after the Lord had spoken the words of condemnation against the leaders of the nation, He said, before He left the house, "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." This of course was not fulfilled when they cried thus when He was about entering Jerusalem. It will be fulfilled in the future when our Lord returns in power and glory and a remnant of His people welcomes Him as the deliverer.

Matthew tells us about the particulars of the preparation to enter Jerusalem upon the ass (Matthew xxi:7; see our exposition of Matthew). The ass is a symbol not of a great conqueror, but of humility. Yet we know from Deborah's song that great men rode upon white asses (Judge. v:10). "No Roman soldier in the garrison of Jerusalem, who standing at his post or sitting in his barrack window, saw our Lord riding on an ass, could report to his centurion that He looked like one who came to wrest the kingdom of Judea out of the hand of the Romans, drive out the governor and his legions from the tower of Antonia, and achieve independence for the Jews with the sword." The day is coming when He will sit upon a white charger, when He comes, not traveling over a dusty country road, but when He comes forth out of the opened heavens; then, and not till then will all the kingdoms fall, and His Kingdom come. Yet there can be no question that many in that vast throng expected something to happen at this time, some startling manifestation by which their carnal expectations of deliverance from the Roman power was to be realized. When it did not come, and they saw Him in the hands of the Romans, a bound captive, the crowds turned from the popular applause, the expecting "Hosanna," to the horrible cry "Crucify Him!"

John alludes briefly to Zechariah's prediction. It must be noticed that Zechariah's great prediction was not fulfilled on that day. The Holy Spirit in quoting from it leaves out on purpose certain statements which can only be fulfilled when He comes again. In fact, like so many other Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, Zechariah ix:9-11 is a blending of His first and second coming.

His disciples beheld all this and yet they understood not. They failed to see the meaning of all this. It was ordered thus by our Lord; His Spirit hid the full meaning of all these things for a purpose. Had they grasped it all, had they understood all about His sufferings, His rejection, His Cross (though it was plainly written in their Scriptures), the enemy might have brought the charge that all was a well-laid scheme. But the fact that they did not understand, nor expect His resurrection from the dead, makes deception, and self-deception especially, impossible. The truth came to them "when Jesus was glorified." This means the gift of His Spirit after His resurrection and ascension, the Holy Spirit who is here as the witness that Christ is in glory. Of Him our Lord had said "He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv:26). When He had come and dwelt in them they understood it all and saw how wonderfully the Lord had dealt with them, used them, and how Scripture had been accomplished.

Verse 17 puts before us once more that greatest of all miracles, the raising up of Lazarus. Those who had been in Bethany, who were the eye witnesses of what had taken place, were undoubtedly in the lead. They bare record, probably somewhat in the following manner: We are well acquainted with Lazarus, Mary and Martha. We often visited their home. Some time ago we received the news that Lazarus was very sick and a few days later we heard that he had died. We at once went to Bethany and found that the report was true. We went to mourn with our friends; some of us wrapped the corpse in the grave clothes and deposited him in the tomb; we put the stone before the tomb and then waited the customary three days. On the fourth day, this man Jesus of Nazareth came. He was a friend of the family; Mary and Martha had sent for Him, as soon as their brother had fallen sick. He delayed His coming till Lazarus was dead and put into the grave. He demanded to see the place where his friend rested in death. Then He astonished us by calling us to take away the stone. Some of us right here responded and we removed the stone from the opening of the tomb. Then He said "Lazarus come forth!" No sooner was the word spoken but Lazarus came forth and life was restored to him. We saw it all and you can go to Bethany and see Lazarus and convince yourself that he is living. And this man, who is riding upon an ass, is the One who did all this. Such must have been their witness before the great multitude. For this cause, on account of this testimony the vast multitude came forth to meet Him, and to join in the cry of welcome.

His enemies, the Pharisees, now appear upon the scene. They were the witnesses of this triumphal entrance of the hated and despised Nazarene, Him, whom they tried to stone, and had counselled to put to death. They acknowledge their helplessness? "The Pharisees, therefore, said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after Him." They were at their wits' end. All along they had planned and tried maliciously to incite the mob against Him, so that they might put Him out of the way. Perhaps they had hoped to accomplish something against Him with the large crowds of people filling the city. But instead of having the masses on their side, they saw that they were on the side of their enemy, acclaiming Him as the King of Israel. They looked on and said amongst themselves: "Behold what has happened!" "Just look at these multitudes with palm branches! Listen to the Hosanna cries!" They confess that the whole world has gone after Him. How true this was! According to the reckoning of Josephus about three million people assembled from everywhere at the Passover time in Jerusalem, and they all shouted His name. The next paragraph tells us that even the attention of Greek Gentiles had been arrested and they desired to see Jesus.

What a moment of triumph! Yet not a word is said about Himself. No record given that He spoke one word in all this scene, or that He, in any way responded to the enthusiasm of the multitude. We believe, unmoved as He was, He looked beyond all what was taking place. He knew what was about to come.

Verses 20–22. And now certain Greeks asked for Him. This incident must have taken place sometime after the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, for if it had been at that time, the inquiring Greeks would have beheld Him, for He was the central figure on that memorable day.

These Greeks were not Grecian Jews, that is Jews who had been away from Palestine and who had become more or less identified with Greek life and spoke the Greek language. Such were the Grecians mentioned in Acts vi. They were natives of Greece who, like some Romans, had turned away from idols and had become proselytes to the Jewish faith. They came up to Jerusalem to the feast to worship, for they had adopted the Hebrew religion, and came to Jerusalem to participate in the divinely commanded feasts of the Lord. To the same class of proselytes belonged the centurion whose son our Lord healed; Cornelius to whom Peter was sent, and the eunuch whom the evangelist Philip met on the road to Gaza.

Perhaps it was the Greek name of Philip which attracted them to him and to present their petition, "Sir, we would see Jesus." The original is more emphatic, "We wish, we desire to see Jesus." We do not know what their motive was, probably more than idle curiosity. The historian Eusebius mentions a tradition that they had been sent by the Syrian king Edessa with a commission to invite Jesus to come to his realm, assuring Him a hearty and princely welcome. But this is nothing but a tradition. The visit of the wise men at the time of the infancy of our Lord was prophetic; the coming of these inquiring Greeks is also prophetic. The leaders of the nation were seeking even then to kill Him, but Gentiles came to seek to know Him; rejected by His own the Gentiles would turn to Him.

Verses 23–26. The request was not granted. Another one might have snatched this opportunity to increase his triumph, for while multitudes had acclaimed Him as the King of Israel, those from afar had come also to know Him. But our Lord is not carried away by any enthusiasm. Instead of motioning the Greeks into His presence to converse with them He said, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified."

It is a different glorification from that which man seeks for himself. He spoke of the glory which should follow His suffering. The coming of these Greeks indicated the time when the strangers from the commonwealth of Israel would seek Him as Saviour, when the middle wall of partition would be broken down, and the salvation of God would go far hence to the Gentiles, so that the other sheep (John x) might be gathered in, to form with the sheep from the Jewish fold, the one flock. But all this could not be accomplished by His earthly life; it necessitated His death. He had to be lifted up first on the cross before all could be drawn to Him. Through death alone could come the glory, the glory He received, and the glory of salvation for a lost world. The words which follow make this clear. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It is a simple, yet deep saying. The seed, the corn of wheat, may be stored in the granary but it is useless there. In order to be a blessing, to reproduce itself, to bestow life, the corn of wheat must be put into the ground, to decay and to die. Out of death life springs and much fruit results. He must die and only through His death could salvation and life be procured. Like the corn of wheat in the granary, if our Lord had done nothing but live and teach and do deeds of mercy, He would have remained alone. Like the corn of wheat put into the ground to die, He died and from His death, His life given vicariously, alone comes the harvest of salvation, life and glory. This great statement of our Lord, introduced with the solemn "Amen—Amen—Verily, Verily" disposed completely of the delusive teaching that union with Christ is brought about by His incarnation, by taking on a human body and living among men. A certain school speaks of Him as taking on sinful, fallen humanity, which is a wicked statement, and that by having taken upon Himself humanity, He lifts humanity back to the favor of God. This one verse silences this evil invention. Not His life, but His death lifts man from the horrible pit and the miry clay. "The Just One died for the unjust that He might bring us to God." The verse answers another equally wicked invention of the natural mind. The modern theology regards the death of Christ as an act of self-denial; or they speak of Him as suffering the martyr's death. When our Lord illustrates His coming death and the blessed results of His death, by the dying of the corn of wheat, He gives a complete answer to these modern enemies of His sacrificial and finished work on the cross.

But who is able to estimate the fruits of His death! It will take all eternity to know and to enjoy the surpassing riches of His grace. The source of all we have and are, what we shall have and shall be, is the cross of Christ, His blessed, precious death for us.

When the corn of wheat dies it reproduces itself in other corns of wheat. The life of the corn of wheat which passed through death is communicated. Even so, we, who have believed, possess His life, the life which passed through death.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." The same statement we find in five other passages in the Gospels (Matthew x:39; xvi:25; Mark viii:35; Luke ix:24; xvii:33).

The same principle of self-sacrifice holds good for the believer, who follows Christ. His path is theirs, a path of suffering and shame. It means to be dead to the world, its glory and its ambitions, to give up and sacrifice, constantly reaching out after the things which are above. What Paul wrote to the Philippians illustrates this saying of our Lord, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ . . .for Whom I suffered the loss of all things, and to count them but dung, that I may win Christ . . . That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. iii:7-10). The practical condemnation which the statement of our Lord, "he that loveth his life shall lose it, etc." passes on the life lived by many should never be overlooked. How few hate their lives here! How many love their lives, and care for nothing but how to make them comfortable and happy! The eternal loss or the eternal gain are often entirely forgotten. How little of the real self-denial and self-sacrifice is known even among God's people in our easy going, pleasure and comfort loving generation! Let us remember it daily, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii:1-4).

True service for the Lord is to follow Him. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." It is a service inseparable from following Him, living in His fellowship, walking in His footsteps, being obedient to Him. How much there is called Christian service, and service for the Lord, which is but service in self-will! True service in Him and with Him has two great promises, given here by our Lord. The first is "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." This gracious promise is repeated in the fourteenth chapter, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also." There will be an eternal union of Christ with His own, an eternal fellowship. All who are Christ's and serve Him will be with Him; wherever He is there we shall be with Him. And whatever He has we shall have and possess with Him. But what does it mean, "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour"! No Saint has ever discovered the full meaning of this great promise, one of the greatest in the Word of God. The Father's delight is His Son. Him He has honored; to Him He has given the pre-eminence in all things. He delights in all who honor His Son, who exalt Him, give Him the first place in their lives, serve Him and follow in His footsteps. Such He will honor; His blessing will be upon them. What will it be in that coming eternity when we shall be in His presence! All who have served the Lord Jesus Christ, who have been true and loyal to Him, will be honored by the Father. This will be heaven: with Christ, and receiving honor and glory from the Father.

"It is impossible not to see throughout this verse that our Lord's intention is to discourage the carnal and earthly expectations of His Jewish followers, and yet to encourage them by showing what they might confidently look for. They must follow in His steps if they were His true servants, and in so following they would find a cross, and not a crown, whatever they may be thinking, at that moment, while the hosannas of an excited crowd were sounding in their ears. But though they had a cross, they should not miss a reward finally, which would make amends for all. They would be with Christ in Glory. They would be honored by God the Father"*

Verses 27-33. In the midst of this scene, when the Greeks had inquired for Him, when He had spoken of the necessity of His death, so that, like the dying corn of wheat, there might be from Him much fruit, He uttered these words of deep soulical emotion. What else did produce this sudden agony but the Cross, which loomed up before His eyes! He was even in His humiliation the omniscient Lord. He knew all things. He knew but a few days more and they would spit in His face, smite His cheeks, scourge His back with the cruel scourge, and nail Him to the tree. But the knowledge of the coming shame and suffering did not affect Him thus. There was something deeper than that. He was to suffer in a way not fully known to us. As the substitute of sinners He who knew no sin was to be made sin and a curse for us. Well says a German expositor: "The only solution of this extreme trouble is the vicarious significance of the sufferings and death of Christ. If our chastisement was upon Him, in order that we might have peace, then in Him must have been concentrated all the horror of death. He bore the sin of the world and the wages of that sin is death. Death therefore must to Him assume its most frightful form. The physical suffering was nothing compared to the immeasurable suffering of soul which impended over the Redeemer, and the full greatness and depth of which He clearly perceives."† He looked forward to the cross, and knowing all it meant when He would become the Sin-bearer His holy soul was stirred by this deep agony. No finite mind can comprehend what it was when He said "Now is My soul troubled." He adds, "What shall I say?" It is a question of anguish, perplexity and deep distress.

Then follows a prayer: "Father, save Me from this hour." This brief utterance must not be detached from the next statement, "But for this cause came I unto this hour." The prayer to be saved from this hour reveals His human nature, though it was sinless, yet in that nature He could suffer and instinctively He shrank from it. His human nature would suggest to ask the Father to save Him from this hour. Thus He spoke in Gethsemane also, "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done" (Matt. xxvi:42). But He answers with a, No. While He tells out His feeling as a true man, He knows that for this cause, to suffer and to die as substitute of sinners, He came unto this hour. Thus He declared His entire submission to His will, to accomplish the purpose of His coming into the world. As one has said, "The struggle is like one of those fissures in the crust of the earth, which enables science to fathom the bowels of the earth. It lets us read the very inmost depths of the Lord's being."

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*Thoughts on John.

†Hengstenberg.

But it was more than a submission to the will of the Father, who sent His Son. His great desire was that the Father's Name might be glorified, "Father, glorify Thy Name." In the great work He came to do the Father is glorified both as to His Name and His attributes. The agony and the pain which passed through His soul are forgotten and His holy ambition is the Father's Glory. We see three significant steps in these utterances of our Lord. First, His sinless human soul shrank from the sufferings. In the second place He expresses His entire submission to the Father's will, and finally He desires the Glory of the Father's Name. It has been remarked that the utmost reach of the renewed will of a believer is to say always, "Father, glorify Thy Name in Me. Do with Me what Thou wilt, only glorify Thy Name." The glory of God after all is the end for which all things were created. Paul was filled with this when he wrote the Philippians, as the prisoner in Rome, "That in all things, by life or by death, Christ might be magnified in my body."

And the Father answers at once. What had taken place, the words His well beloved Son had spoken, pleased Him. Therefore His voice was heard from heaven. It is the third time the Father spoke above His Son. That voice was heard when the Lord had gone into Jordan for baptism; it was heard on the Mount of Transfiguration, and now for the third time, as the Son of God is about to suffer and to die, the Father speaks. Here as at the other occasions the positive proof is given that the Father and the Son are two distinct persons. It was a miracle when that voice was heard; while we cannot explain it, as no other miracle can be explained, we reverently believe it. The voice declared, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." What glorification is this? Some have explained it as meaning that the Father had been glorified in His incarnation, in His miracles, in the Word which His Son had spoken, and now His Name was to be again glorified in His suffering and death. We believe it refers rather to the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead and to His own resurrection. When our Lord was informed of the illness of His friend, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but unto the glory of God." When therefore Lazarus was raised from the dead it glorified the Name of the Father. Again, He would be glorified in the resurrection of His own Son.

That something miraculous had taken place the whole company of people who were present realized. All heard it and some said that it was thunder, while others hearing the sounds distinctly declared that it was an angel who had spoken. None recognized the Father's voice, the Son only heard and understood. Some think that the Greeks, who were probably still in that company, said that it thundered, while the Jews knew that a voice had really spoken, and they thought it was an angel. But that there must have been persons among them who heard the actual voice is vouched for by the words of our Lord when He said: "This voice came not for My sake but for your sakes." It confirmed once more the fact of His Deity.

"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." This passage, which has been considered one of the difficult verses in this Gospel, becomes simple when we consider that it is anticipative. He speaks of the work of the Cross as already accomplished, and that the result of it will be the judgment of this world and the casting out of the Prince of this world (Satan). The death of Christ is the condemnation of this world and all its glory; believers, who are in Christ, dead with Him and risen with Him, are dead to the world and the world is dead unto them. The sentence of judgment is passed upon the world, and its prince is also judged, in due time he will be cast out. How and when this is to be consummated the Book of Revelation tells us more fully (Rev. xii and xx). The death of Christ has stripped the prince of this world of his power and sealed his coming eternal doom, but it is by His death that He "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them" (Col. ii:15). In speaking these words our Lord regarded all accomplished by His sacrificial death, as it will be in fact in His Second Coming.

We quote an excellent comment on this verse by Dr. Lyman Abbott, given in his commentary on the Gospel of John, written fifty years ago, when this man was sound in the faith and not a critical unbeliever. "The world's battle was fought and the victory won at Calvary. The Second Coming of Christ is not to redeem the world, but to realize for the world the fruits of redemption, in an established and eternal kingdom of righteousness, after, by the cross, humanity has been judged, the devil cast out, and the redeemed race lifted up. The passages of the New Testament which imply the continuing influence of the devil (Rom. xvi:20; 2 Cor. iv:4; Eph. ii:2; vi:12; etc.) are not inconsistent with Christ's language here, because what Christ says is prophetic; He speaks of that as already accomplished which is absolutely certain to be accomplished by the power of that divine sacrifice, so soon by Him to be consummated."

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." Quite often the statement of our Lord is applied to the preaching of the Gospel, that if Christ is lifted up in preaching, His power to attract will be manifested. This certainly is true, but it is not the meaning of the words our Lord spoke here. He spoke of His death by crucifixion. Nor does the lifting up mean His ascension. It must also be noticed when He speaks in this manner of His being lifted up, nailed to the cross, He did not say, "*When* I be lifted up," but "*if* I be lifted up." His crucifixion was contingent; it was dependent on His own voluntary submission. Even in the hour of His arrest the way of deliverance was open to Him. And this great work finished, Christ crucified, lifted up, dying for sinners, making known the love and righteousness of God, is His power to draw all men unto Him. "All men" does not mean what Calvin read into it, and which a few of his followers still maintain, that it means only the elect. Nor does it mean the salvation of every member of the human race as others teach. All men means both Jews and Gentiles, those who hear the Gospel, and hearing, believe on Him. We must not think that these words support the deadly heresy of universal salvation. We must not suppose them to mean that all men shall actually be saved by Christ's crucifixion, any more than we must suppose that Christ actually "lights" every one into the world (John i:9). The analogy of other texts shows plainly that the only reasonable sense is, that Christ's crucifixion would have a "drawing" influence on men of all nations, Gentiles as well as Jews. Scripture and facts show us that all persons are not actually drawn to Christ. Many live and die and are lost in unbelief.* The meaning of this statement of our Lord is wider still. The day will come when the nations of the earth will be gathered into the kingdom.

Verses 35-36. The question they had asked of Him: "How sayest Thou, the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is the Son of Man?" He left unanswered. He knew that these questions came not out of sincere, seeking hearts. Behind them He saw sneers and ridicule and He never answered such. Instead He made some great declarations. He is the Light. For a little while longer, only for a few days, He would tarry with them. Soon He would be no longer in their midst. The day of light and opportunity for them as His people was drawing rapidly to a close. He had seen with His omniscient vision that the storm clouds of judgment were gathering over Jerusalem and the nation, and therefore urges them to act now, while it was still light for them, and flee to Him and to His shelter. Darkness was rapidly approaching and coming upon them, then would they wander about in darkness without any ray of light, without aim and without any peace and rest. History tells us how all this was fulfilled after they had delivered the Son of

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*Bishop Ryle.

Man into the hands of the Gentiles. The years between the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the siege and destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in the year 70, were years of darkness and confusion. Judicial blindness settled upon them and ever since they were dispersed among the nations, the prediction of our Lord has been literally fulfilled; they walk in darkness and know not where they are going. And such is the fate of all who reject Him who is the Light and refuse to acknowledge Him as Saviour and Lord. A human being can find light, and be a child of light, only by believing on Him. Then He departed; He was hidden from them. This action may be looked upon as confirming what He had spoken, a kind of symbolical action.

Verses 37-41. Here is a deep and interesting commentary on some of the great utterances of the Prophet Isaiah, which are of much importance at the present time, when this great prophetic book is so much slandered by the infidel critics in the camp of Protestantism. The first quotation is from the great Fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Here is the fullest confirmation that this famous chapter, revealing the rejection, the death, the sacrificial work, the burial, the resurrection and glory of the Servant of the Lord, applies to the Lord Jesus Christ. The ancient synagogue always believed this. When it was found out by Jews that this chapter was extensively used in convincing Jews of the Messianity of the Lord Jesus Christ, they invented the theory that the person described in that chapter is not the Messiah, but the Jewish nation, that they suffer vicariously for the other nations. In doing this they revealed their awful blindness as well as hatred against the Lord. This miserable invention is upheld and taught in all the theological institutions, seminaries and Bible institutes which are on the side of the evolutionary, modern theology, if it deserves to be called by this honored name. In other words, destructive criticism has joined hands with infidel Judaism in rejecting the Messianic meaning of the great Isaiahian prophecy.

Isaiah in the Spirit foresaw the unbelief of the nation, which was now about to be consummated in the rejection of Jesus, our Lord. Some fatalists, ultra-Calvinists, claim upon these words, "They believed not on Him that the saying of Isaiah the Prophet might be fulfilled," that they mean that their unbelief was manifested in order that this prophecy might be fulfilled. God knew that they would not believe, and therefore Isaiah spoke these words. Chrysostom wrote: "It was not because Isaiah spake these words that they believed not, because they were not about to believe, that He spake." The next statement appears more difficult: "Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again." It does not mean that the Jews were unable to believe, though willing, because Isaiah had spoken these words seven hundred years before. Long before our Lord appeared on earth the Jewish people had deliberately hardened their hearts and turned away from Him. They were already in that state of judicial blindness, which Isaiah had predicted, and for this reason they were not able to believe.

The quotation is from Isaiah vi in connection with the great vision of the glory of the Lord. The words which are quoted here concerning their hardened hearts and their judicial blindness are quoted also in Matthew xiii and in the last chapter of the Book of Acts. The dispensational character of Matthew xiii is known to all Bible students and teachers, who divide the Word of Truth rightly. In the opening chapters of the Gospel of Matthew the Lord Jesus is seen as the promised King, heralding the Kingdom, that kingdom which is promised to Israel. In the twelfth chapter the opposition and the unbelief of the Jews becomes a known fact, and symbolically our Lord breaks off the relationship with His people Israel; and declares a coming new relationship with all who do the will of His Father. Then at the seashore He teaches concerning the kingdom in another form, the form it takes on after His own received Him not. In connection with this we find Isaiah vi quoted; and it is fitting that it should be so. "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Matt. xiii:14-15).*

Here in the Gospel of John, preceding the death of our Lord, the same prophecy is quoted. The continued miracles of our Lord, His words and His warnings were not heeded by the nation, hence they were given over to blindness as a just punishment, just as the Prophet had foreseen.

In the last chapter of Acts, the prisoner of the Lord, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, gathered in his lodging a number of Jews; they were "the chief of the Jews." It is also understood by all well balanced Bible teachers that the Book of Acts begins with another testimony on kingdom lines to the Jews first, only to reveal the same hardness of hearts and blindness. When Paul gave a final testimony to these chief Jews and they turned a deaf ear to it, the passage of Isaiah is quoted for the last time (Acts xxviii:25-31). The prediction of Isaiah has now been true for almost 1900 years, and will be in force till some day a remnant will return and "they shall look upon Him whom they pierced and mourn for Him" (Zech. xii:9-14).

"This is no doubt a very solemn and awful subject. It seems at first sight to make God the author of man's destruction. But surely a moment's reflection will show us that God is a Sovereign in punishing, and may punish in any way He pleases. Some He cuts off suddenly the moment they sin. Others He gives over to judicial blindness, and ceases to strive with their consciences. 'The Judge of all the earth will certainly do right.' Those whom He is said to 'harden and blind' will always be found to be persons whom He had previously warned, exhorted, and constantly summoned to repent. And never is He said to harden and blind, and give men up to judicial hardness and blindness, till after a long course of warnings. This was certainly the case with Pharaoh and with the Jews.

"The consequence of God blinding and hardening a person is that He does not 'see' his danger with his eyes, or 'understand' his position with his heart. The result is that he holds on his way unconverted, and dies without his soul's disease being healed. 'Seeing' and 'understanding' are essential parts of conversion. No simpler reason can be given why myriads of church-goers continue careless, unaffected, unmoved and unconverted; they neither 'see' nor 'understand.' God alone can give them seeing eyes and understanding hearts, and ministers cannot. And one solemn reason why many live and die in this state is, that they have resisted God's warnings, and are justly punished already with a judicial blindness and hardness, by Him whom they have resisted.

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*See our larger Commentary on Matthew for a fuller treatment of this important truth.

"The key to the whole difficulty, after all, lies in the answer we are prepared to give to the question: 'Is God just in punishing the sinner?' The true Christian and honest Bible reader will find no difficulty in answering that question in the affirmative. Once grant that God is just in punishing the ungodly, and there is an end of the problem. God may punish by giving over the obstinate sinner to a reprobate mind, as really as by sentencing him to everlasting fire at the last day.

"One thing only must never be forgotten. God 'willeth not the death of any sinner.' He is willing to soften the hardest heart, and to open the blind eyes of the greatest sinner. In dealing with men about their souls we must never forget this. We may well remind them that by hardened impenitence they may provoke God to give them up. But we must also press on them that God's mercies in Christ are infinite, and that, if they are finally lost, they will have none but themselves to blame."*

And here is still another important fact and comment in connection with the sixth chapter of Isaiah. When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting in the temple and saw His Glory, He saw the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. "He saw His glory and spake of Him." This is one of the blessed evidences that the Lord Jesus revealed Himself in pre-incarnation times and that He is God, and possesses the glory of God.

Verses 42-43. His testimony had not been in vain. A number of the chief rulers believed on Him; among them were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Yet they were cowards; they did not come out boldly to confess Him. From chapter ix:22, we learn that they had agreed among themselves, that if any did confess that Jesus is the Christ, that he should be put out of the synagogue. This was before man a great dishonor; it meant that the excommunicated one was on the same level as the Gentile, outside, a dog. For such a one there was no hope of salvation nor any hope to participate in the future hope of the nation. The blind man, whom the Lord healed (chapter ix) was the first one whom they cast out, but he became one of the sheep of the flock the Shepherd came to gather. But there was a moral reason why they did not want to confess Him openly. They loved the praises of man more than the praise of God. They received honor from each other and did not seek the praise which comes from God only (John v:44). It showed that they had no true faith in God, hence they could not be true to their convictions. They knew it meant ridicule and dishonor; it meant their standing and good name, as the world says. They were not willing to pay the price. And this is still the case with Jews and Gentiles as well. We have talked with Hebrews about the Lord Jesus and heard their confession, that they believed that He is their Messiah, but on account of the fear of being repudiated by their friends, and loss of business, they would not make a public confession. "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. xxix-25). It is thus among professing Christians and also among believers. The latter know often that the men who teach and preach are deniers of Christ and the Truth of God, but loving the praises of man more than the praise of God, they can continue in active fellowship with these modern Judases, and thus becoming partakers of their evil deeds (2 John verses 10-12). Such lose their rewards, while those who are not ashamed to confess Him before men, and leave "the camp" where He is denied and dishonored, will receive their glorious reward in the day of His appearing.

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*Thoughts on John.

Verses 44-50. These words contain the final public testimony of our Lord, according to this Gospel. In the chapter which follows, the mass of unbelieving Jews are left behind and He is alone with the twelve; but soon he who was not a believer in Him, Judas, left, and Christ has but the eleven with Him.

He has departed. For a time He was not seen by them. At His return He uttered these solemn words. Once more He gives His great self-witness, so prominent in this Gospel, as to His unity with the Father. This great witness began with the fifth chapter. He also bears the same witness in the next section of this Gospel before His disciples. Belief in Him means not only belief in Himself but also in Him who sent Him, that is God, the Father. Seeing Him means seeing Him who sent Him. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (xiv:9). There is such complete unity between the Father and the Son, that believing in the Son means believing in the Father. Perhaps our Lord spoke this word also for the encouragement of those who were afraid to confess Him, as He spoke later to His disciples—"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." In the next place He speaks of Himself once more as the Light. "I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness." He was always the Light, dwelling with God and in God, in that unapproachable Light. Of Him it is true, "God is Light, in Him there is no darkness at all." But He came into the world, a world of darkness and sin. Through Him the darkness is dispelled and those who believe on Him abide no longer in darkness. "This verse shows that (1) Christ existed before His incarnation, even as the Sun exists before it appears above the Eastern hills; (2) that Christ is the one Saviour of the world, even as there is but one Sun; (3) that He came not for one nation, but for all, as the Sun shines for all the world."*

And those who hear His words and believe not, He does not judge; for He came not to judge the world, but to save the world. These words do not clash in the least with His statement in the fifth chapter when He said, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." It must be understood the same way as John iii:17. In connection with His first coming our Lord does not judge; His judgment work is linked with His second coming. Of this future judgment He speaks in the following words: "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." The word "reject" means literally translated "displace." To reject Christ does not necessarily involve a deliberate rejection of His person. The simple fact of neglecting Him, thinking Him of not much importance is a rejection of Himself, whom the Father sent. Any one who slights Him thus, and does not give to Him the place which belongs to Him, also does not receive His words; while on the other hand those who receive Him, bow to His authority, believe on Him as Saviour, the sent-One of the Father, receive His words and obey them. They will be that which judgeth all who rejected Him, it is the word which He had spoken. In the judgment to come His Word will rise up and condemn all who did not believe, for in that day it will be found out that His Word is true and all who rejected it and did not receive Him, who is the living Word, will be judged. The destructive Critics of today, with their inventions and hatred of the Word of God, will then receive their well deserved condemnation. Such a judgment is surely coming, for the infallible Son of God tells us so.

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*Dean Bourgon.

His words which He had spoken were not spoken independent of the Father. The Jews who listened to Him and to His words might think that He spoke of Himself, but He declares that all His words were God-given. What He spoke was always spoken in closest fellowship with the Father. He is the One whom Moses announced: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words into his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut. xviii:18-19). The Son of God had received from the Father the commandment, what He should say and what He should speak.

"When we read of the Father 'sending' Christ, and giving Christ a 'commandment,' we must carefully dismiss from our minds all idea of any inferiority to God the Father on the part of God the Son. The expressions are used in condescension to our weak faculties, to convey the idea of perfect oneness. We are not speaking of the relation that exists between two human beings like ourselves, but between the Persons in the Divine Trinity. The '*sending*' of the Son was the result of the eternal counsel of that blessed Trinity, in which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are co-equal and co-eternal. The eternal Son was as willing to be 'sent' as the eternal Father was to 'send' Him.—The '*commandment*' given by the Father to the Son as to what He should teach and do, was not a commandment in which the Son had no part but to obey. It was simply the charge or commission arranged in the covenant of redemption, by all three Persons in the Trinity, which the Son was as willing to execute as the Father was willing to give."*

The commandment of which He speaks particularly is that of life everlasting. The words He spoke are the words of life, as Peter said, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." Beginning with the third chapter we have followed the great unfoldings of that life which He came to reveal, and finally we read in His great prayer that the Father has given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him.

With this statement the public ministry of our Lord as recorded in this Gospel ends. With the next chapter we enter into that part of the Gospel where we find our Lord alone with those given to Him by the Father, His eleven disciples.

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*Dean Bourgon.

CHAPTER XIII

The structure of this Gospel has been compared with the three divisions of Israel's earthly sanctuary. There was an outer court, a holy part and the holy of holies. The first twelve chapters have been likened to the outer court. Our Lord moved in the midst of the mass of Jews, surrounded by His enemies, bearing witness to Himself, manifesting His glory in the signs of power, and hated by the great number of Jews. And now He leaves them behind and gathers His disciples about Himself to address them. He is in the holy part in fellowship with His own. The holy of holies is the seventeenth chapter.

Every reader of the New Testament knows that chapters xiii-xvii are peculiar to this Gospel; what we find here recorded is not mentioned in the preceding Gospels. That these great words of our Lord were known to Matthew no one doubts. He belonged to the twelve and was present in the place where our Lord had gathered His disciples. Why did he not put these words, and the occurrence of the feet washing into his record? The answer is not difficult to find. Matthew wrote about our Lord as King; his Gospel is the Gospel of the kingdom. There was no place in his Gospel to give an account of what took place between the Lord and His disciples. Nor could these sayings of our Lord be rightfully embodied in the other two synoptic Gospels. The Holy Spirit did not permit their record in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, but reserved the writing for the pen of John. In this Gospel with its great message as to His Deity and the eternal life those receive who believe on Him, we shall find that the teachings He gives to His disciples are but an expansion of the truth concerning eternal life, what it is, what goes with it, prayer, fruit-bearing, and the gift of the Holy Spirit and His mission on earth during the physical absence of our Lord.

On the other hand, many sayings and events of the days preceding the sacrificial death of our Lord, recorded in the Synoptics are not found in the fourth Gospel. The parables relating to the kingdom are omitted. John has nothing to say about the Pharisees and Sadducees tempting the Lord, nor does He mention the public charge against these leaders, as given in Matthew xxiii. Still more significant is the omission of the entire Olivet Discourse. As we know, that discourse is a great prophecy, recorded in full only by Matthew, for the discourse contains the prophecy concerning the return of the King. Inasmuch as John's Gospel records the message of our Lord as to salvation, the gift of eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit, anticipating the Church, the one flock (John x), the visible and personal return of the Lord for the regathering of Israel and the judgment of the nations is not embodied in this Gospel. Instead of these prophetic teachings, so prominent in the Synoptics, we find in this Gospel a new promise, given to His eleven disciples, when He spoke to them about the Father's house and assured them, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Nor do we read anything in this Gospel about the institution of the Lord's supper. Some commentators say that John thought it needless to repeat this account, because each of the preceding Gospels give it, and Paul also recorded it in the Epistle to the Corinthians. Such a statement makes John the author of the Gospel and not the Holy Spirit.

There is a good reason why neither baptism nor the Lord's supper are mentioned in this Gospel. These two ordinances are omitted in this document in which salvation and eternal life are taught, showing that neither has anything to do with the gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Holy Spirit anticipated the time when in ritualistic Christendom ordinances would be proclaimed as necessary to salvation, and that without the sacraments, duly administered, eternal life would be impossible.

Verses 1-5. Passover was about to take place. The hour had come, the hour of His suffering, His death and resurrection, the hour that He should depart out of this world, which knew Him not, and return to the Father. That hour was fixed before the foundation of the world in the eternal counsels of the Godhead. He knew this hour from the beginning; nothing could happen to Him till this hour came. We heard Him say in this Gospel, "Mine hour is not yet come." But now the great and solemn hour had come. He knew it from the beginning. He knew the hour in His boyhood, and when He read His own Hebrew Scriptures He saw the hour of the cross on every page. He knew it in His youth, when toiling in the carpenter shop of Nazareth. He knew it at the time of His baptism, and all along in His gracious ministry He knew the hour, and now it had come.

In connection with this we find a most tender statement, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." All along they had been the objects of His love. He knew what they were in themselves. He knew that in a few hours they would forsake Him and Peter would deny Him, yet He loved them unto the end. His love was undiminished. They were His own. He had come unto His own and His own received Him not (i:11). But here are those who are His own in a higher sense of the word. Of these eleven disciples He says later in His great prayer, "The men which Thou gavest Me out of the world." Those who believe on Him, accept Him, trust Him and serve Him are His own; as born again they are not of the world, even as He is not of the world. Yet believers though not of the world yet are still in the world, surrounded by evil. In this world they have tribulation, but His love towards His own remains always the same. His love passeth knowledge. And now He is in an act of deepest condescension to demonstrate that love and show symbolically the continuation of that love, even unto the end, till they are brought home to be with Him.

The supper was in progress. It was not the supper called "The Lord's Supper," but the ordinary Passover supper, which the Lord ate with His disciples. Before we read of His act of love and condescension, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, is brought to our attention. Twice we read of him in this chapter. Here is the record that the devil had put it into his heart to betray the Lord. Before our Lord had announced that one of the twelve was a devil (chapter vi:70). He was the only one among the disciples who did not believe on Jesus as Lord. He called Him, Rabbi, or Master. Judas Iscariot did not believe in the Deity of Christ and underneath his unbelief was sin; he loved money, he was a thief. Yielding thus to sin, living in sin, rejecting the matchless love of Him in whose outward fellowship he walked, whose acts of power and mercy he beheld, he became the willing tool of the devil. "The devil having now put into the heart of Judas," means literally, "the devil having already dropped into the heart of Judas." The seed had been sown in the unbelieving heart of this man of sin, the son of perdition. The devil probably had done this at the anointing by Mary (Matt. xxvi:14).

Judas was present at the washing of the feet; he was present during the supper, and after the Lord had given him the sop, Satan actually entered into him. After that he went out into the night, that night of eternal woe and darkness. And now before we see our Lord rising from the supper and girding Himself for service, we are reminded once more of His Person and His knowledge, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God." We believe this statement is here introduced to show forth the greatness of His loving condescension. He who is one with the Father, who came from God, went back to God, who is God and in whose hands are all things, stooped down to wash the feet of the creature.

Everything is minutely described. First, He arose from the supper. None of them knew what He was about to do. Then He laid aside His garments, that is the long loose, flowing outer garment, which would have hindered Him in performing what He was about to do. Then He took a towel and girded Himself. He garbed Himself as a servant ready to do a servant's work.

Then He took a basin, filled it with water, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and wiping them with the towel with which He was girded. Feetwashing was a rite of hospitality, as we learn from different passages in the Old Testament. Immediately after a guest presented himself at the tent door, it was customary to offer the necessary materials for washing the feet (Gen. xviii:4, xix:2, xxiv:32, xliv:24; Judges xix:21). It was considered an act of humility and affection. But who can describe the scene before us, kneeling at His disciples' feet and in unfathomable love serving them in this manner!

Verses 6-11. Probably He had washed the feet of several disciples before He came to Peter. It was too much for Peter, to see Him, at whose feet He had fallen and cried out, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man," to see His holy Lord ready to take his feet into His hands and wash them. "Dost Thou wash my feet?" The emphasis must be placed on the word "*Thou.*" Chrysostom says Peter meant, "With those hands with which Thou hast opened eyes, cleansed lepers and raised the dead?"

He receives as an answer from the Lord the information that His action in its true meaning was unknown to Peter. "What I do Thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know afterward." The application is first of all to what the Lord was doing here; the afterward means the time when the Holy Spirit had come and made the things of Christ more fully known to their hearts. But the application in a wider sense cannot be denied. Many things are happening in the lives of God's people, losses, suffering of various descriptions, strange and unexplainable providences, mysterious leadings. How often it is true, "What He does now we do not know," but it is equally true, "We shall know afterward," and all will be known by us, that it was all-wise, all-merciful, all-loving, yea, that all things worked together for good. But Peter did not profit by these words; he did not hold forth his feet so that the Lord might wash them. He withdrew more fully and said, "In no wise shalt Thou wash my feet forever." He refused completely. Then the Lord told him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." But let us see, before showing the deeper meaning of this impressive scene, what Peter answered and what the Lord said in reply. Peter, when he heard these words, went to the other extreme. When he heard it was a question of having part with Christ, he burst out with the request, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." To this the Lord answered, "He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean."

That all this has a deeper meaning than the literal action of our Lord appears on the surface. The statement of our Lord that they would know the meaning afterward makes this clear. And now that the Holy Spirit has come we know what the washing of the disciples' feet symbolizes. In this Gospel we read much of water and of blood. Blood is for atonement, water is for purification. In the first epistle of John we also read of water and blood, "He that came by water and blood, not in water only, but in water and blood" (1 John v:6).

It is His precious blood which washes our sins away; but it is the water which cleanses those who belong to Him. Out of His pierced side came blood and water (chapter xix: 34), the emblems of atonement and cleansing. In washing the disciples' feet, when our Lord said to Peter that all had been washed, or as this word indicates (bathed), and were clean every whit, He meant by it the new birth by water (the Word) and the Spirit. They had believed on Him and were born again, except Judas, who was meant when He said, "but not all." We read in Titus iii:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the *bath of regeneration* and renewing of the Holy Spirit." This great work is done once and for all; it cannot be repeated, just as the natural birth cannot be repeated with the same individual.

He washed the disciples' feet, not their hands. Hands are for work and feet for walking. As the believer walks in an evil age he contracts defilement, and this interrupts our fellowship with Him. We therefore need cleansing. This He has graciously provided and the washing of the feet typifies this need. To accomplish this He uses His Word. It is the great truth which the Apostle Paul states in Ephesians: "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. v:25-26). We must come to Him with our sins and failures, with our imperfect walk and our defilement, and place ourselves into His loving hands as the disciples placed their feet into His hands. He searches us by His Spirit and cleanses us, so that we can have part with Him in fellowship. This necessitates from our side heart-searching, self-judgment and confession. If this is not practiced we may be saved, but we know nothing of real fellowship with Him, and are at a distance. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John i and ii). It is His blessed work as advocate that He cleanses us by the washing of water by the Word and restores us to His fellowship. "The great practical truth," says another, "in these words ought to be carefully noted and treasured up by all believers. Once joined to Christ and cleansed in His blood, they are completely absolved and free from all spot and guilt, and are counted without blame before God. But all this they need every day, as they walk through the world, to confess their daily failures, and sue for daily pardon. They require, in short, a daily washing of their feet, over and above the great washing of justification, which is theirs the moment they first believe. He that neglects this daily washing is a very questionable and doubtful kind of a Christian." Luther remarks pithily, "The Devil allows no Christian to reach heaven with clean feet all the way."

May we know and use the great and loving provision made for us who belong to Him—the washing of water by the Word which the Holy Spirit applies in answer to the Advocacy of our Lord with the Father.

Verses 12-17. The act of the washing of the disciples' feet was ended. The towel with which He had girded Himself was laid aside, and the garment, the loose flowing robe which He had discarded to be free for His service, was once more put on by Him. After He sat down again in their midst, He asked the question "Know ye what I have done to you?" There was probably a brief pause; no answer came from the disciples. They knew that He had washed their feet; the deeper meaning they understood not. And so He continued, "Ye call me the Master (or Teacher) and the Lord; and ye say well, for so I am." According to the original text He did not speak of Himself as "a Master" and "a Lord," but the definite article is connected with the words "Master" and "Lord." He is *the* Master and *the* Lord—so I am, He said. The humble service performed had been performed by one who was not only fully conscious of His greatness but who in the very service claimed that greatness. Before in this Gospel, He had witnessed to His Lordship in the presence of the unbelieving Jews, and here He bears witness to it again in the presence of the twelve. He sanctions and fully endorses the disciples in their calling Him the Lord. It was faith in them which honored Him in this way.

Well may we think here of the unscriptural habit which so many Christians have of using constantly the name "Jesus," never speaking of Him as the Lord, or of the Lord Jesus Christ. Certain movements, like the Pentecostalists, men and women evangelists, all kinds of cults and fanatical sects, never speak of Him as the Lord, but with an astonishing spirit of familiarity they speak of "Jesus" in a sentimental way. The same is true of the literature of the destructive criticism. They also speak and write about "Jesus" and do not own Him in His Lordship. The Holy Spirit, who is here to glorify Christ will never lead any person to use the earthly name "Jesus." "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and that no man can say that Jesus is *the* Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians xii:3).

"If I then, the Lord and the Master, washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." The text does not say "your teacher" or "your Lord." That might mean that He was their Lord and Teacher by their own selection; but He said, "If I then, the Lord and the Master (or Teacher), washed your feet." Then follows the command "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Is this a command which is to be literally understood and practiced? Is feet-washing an ordinance like "the Lord's supper" or "Baptism"? The only other reference to feet-washing in the literal sense is in 1 Timothy v:10. There can be no question that it means in that passage not a religious ceremony but an act of hospitality. It was in the fourth century that feet-washing as a religious act is mentioned for the first time in ecclesiastical history. It was then practiced in connection with baptism. It is still practiced in some monasteries of the Greek Orthodox Church. The Romish Church also practices it in a strange way. The "would-be head" of the church and vice-regent of Christ, the Pope, once a year on the so-called "Maundy-Thursday," the Thursday before Easter, washes the feet of certain poor men, we believe twelve, who are specially selected and prepared for the occasion. Then there are certain small Protestant bodies, which practice feet washing. That the feet-washing is not to be literally carried out is demonstrated by the silence of the Epistles about this act. Both Baptism and the Lord's Supper are repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament, and their literalness as ordinances maintained; the Church has practiced both ordinances from the very beginning. But the Epistles have nothing to say about feet-washing as an ordinance. Furthermore if our Lord had meant a literal feet-washing, why did He ask the disciples "Know you what I have done to you?" He had reference to the spiritual meaning and not to the literal act.

The feet-washing has a true spiritual meaning. He served them in love and in humility, so should we serve one another. He had given them an example. He had taught the same in words before as He did in the washing of the feet. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx:26-28). As He had waited on them, so should we wait on each other; as He had taken the lowest place in their midst, though Lord of all, so should we take the lowest place before each other; as He had ministered, so should we minister to each other. But we must go still deeper. Inasmuch as the washing of the disciples' feet signifies, as we stated before, the cleansing of the disciples feet from defilement, the work of Christ for His own by washing them by the cleansing of water, the Word of God, the Lord teaches us that what He does for us in His gracious ministrations, that we should also do to each other. If a fellow Christian has soiled his feet, has sinned, we must go after him in love and humility to restore him. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in any fault, ye that are spiritual restore such an one in a spirit of meekness" (Gal. vi:1). This is true feet-washing. In the restoration of a brother in Christ who has failed, not the sword is needed to cut and to wound, but the basin and the towel, the humble, gracious service. But that needs faith, self-denial and deep affection, such which the Holy Spirit alone can impart. And therefore He said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you"—I have shown you symbolically in washing your feet the cleansing which you need and which I perform for you; do the same to each other.

Another "verily, verily" follows. The servant is not greater than his lord, nor is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. It is a solemn remembrance charge that the servant must follow the example of the Teacher, the sent one, the example of him that sent. Love and humility are the two great features in this blessed scene in the upper room, and love and humility must be reproduced in the servant of Christ. And the Lord who spoke these words and pronounced a blessing—"If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them"—knew in His divine omniscience how soon those who claim to be his ministers would manifest hatred instead of love, pride instead of humility; and so it is still, but not without the exception of many who through grace follow His gracious example. The words, "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them," guard strongly against the literal interpretation of the literal feet-washing. Know what things? That He had washed their feet? Of course they knew that. Therefore it is the spiritual meaning which is to be known and to be practiced.

Verses 18-20. The eighteenth verse evidently takes up the statement given by our Lord in the tenth verse. He had chosen twelve and He had washed the feet of all His twelve disciples, but He knew whom He had chosen. He knew Judas who was about to betray Him. He had chosen him as a disciple, knowing that he had a devil (chapter vi:70).

And Judas Iscariot had never known Him as Lord; he never spoke of Him as the Lord, hence Judas was not born of God. But why did the Lord select him to such a place of honor? Why, knowing his character as He did, did He make him one of the twelve, one of His constant companions? The answer is given by Himself and we do not need to speculate or try to reason to find an answer to the "Why?" He had chosen him an apostle "that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me" (Psalm xli:9). It is unfortunate that the verses are divided as they are. The better division is to put the first sentence of verse 19 over to the preceding verse and read, "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me, now I tell you before it come. That when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am." The fulfillment of His prediction based on the prophecy of the forty-first Psalm would prove to them His Deity, that He is the omniscient I AM. Psalm xli refers to the treachery of Ahithopel towards David, and is therefore a prophetic type of Judas's treachery against David's Son and David's Lord. The words which follow in verse 20 were spoken by Him to comfort His true disciples and to show them that they were unaffected by Judas's coming betrayal and horrible fall.

Verses 21-30. As the Apostle John does not record the institution of the Lord's supper, the question arises at what point did it occur? There has been much written on this question, and also on Judas's presence at the supper. It may have been at this time that the Lord's supper took place, for there seems to be a pause between the twentieth and twenty-first verses. And now again we see Him troubled in spirit. (See xi:33 and xii:27). Great distress is upon Him. But that distress was not on account of Himself, a feeling of self-pity and fear. These emotions had no place in the holy soul of our Lord. The distress was produced by His own holiness, and love in behalf of Judas about to betray Him. He loved Judas. On the other hand, in His holiness He was troubled over the awful sin which His disciple was about to commit, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me (or give Me up)." We behold the anxious looks of the disciples. They looked at each other; they were puzzled and did not know of whom He spake. Evidently the heart of Judas was hardened to such an extent that no blush on his cheek, no paleness of face, not a single change of feature was noticeable to the eleven; as they looked into the face of Judas they saw he was calm and undisturbed, yet all was planned in his sinful, unbelieving heart.

According to oriental custom the Lord and the twelve were not sitting on chairs around a table; they were reclining, and leaning on the bosom of the Lord, next to His heart, was the beloved disciple, none other than John the writer of this Gospel. He speaks of himself for the first time here as the beloved disciple. Four times more this term is employed by John. In all, the phrase "whom Jesus loved" is found seven times in this Gospel, twice it is used in connection with Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and five times it refers to John. Why the Lord Jesus had singled him out for His special love we do not know. John has been charged with egotism in speaking of himself thus. Such a charge is unfounded. He wrote under the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit; it was He who put this statement into his pen. And let it be noticed, while John undoubtedly loved the Lord, it is not his love for the Lord, but the love of the Lord for John, which the Spirit of God reveals. Then Peter turned to John. It is the same earnest, zealous, impetuous Peter. He is agitated over the words which the Lord had spoken; he must know at once. He requests John to find out from the Lord who it is. And John whispered to Him, "Lord, who is it?" A solemn moment it must have been. Then the Lord answered the request. Was it spoken in a loud voice? We rather think it was whispered to John. "He it is, to whom I shall give the sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." It is an oriental custom to dip a choice morsel of bread or meat into the sauce, and pass it as a special token of kindness to a favored guest. This our Lord did to Judas. No doubt it was a loving act from the side of our Lord, His last appeal to the heart of Judas. The betrayal had been planned by this disciple. It has been suggested that Judas knew of different attacks upon the life of our Lord and that He escaped; that he thought that He would also escape on this occasion, while he would reap a reward to gratify his besetting sin; and afterward Judas might have looked for mercy after his deed had been unsuccessful. We cannot be sure of this but it is not unlikely that the liar from the beginning, who had put it into his heart to betray Christ, used some such deceptive suggestion.

"And after the sop Satan entered into him." He had rejected the winning love and the warning words, and now Satan got full and complete possession of him. All along Judas had been under the influence of his master, whom he served instead of the Lord, whose lovely face of grace he beheld and whose works of power and mercy he had seen for three years. But now after he had received that love-token from the Christ whom he so willfully rejected, without yielding to repentance, **then** Satan entered into him. That awful being possessed and controlled him now fully. As are many today who love sin, who love darkness more than light, who also have yielded themselves completely as tools to Satan.

"Then said Jesus unto him, What thou doest do quickly." These words have been variously interpreted. It is a solemn sentence for it announces for Himself that His life down here was soon to end, while for the deluded Judas, Satan's instrument, it announced everlasting, never-ending wrath. Some have suggested that the Lord desired to hasten this act of consummated wickedness; but this is not true. He knew all that would take place and the act which Judas was to perform; He knew that Satan had entered into him. The murderer from the beginning was about to use man to kill the Lord of glory. Judas had hardened his heart; there was no remedy for him; he had set his heart on doing it and therefore the Lord said, "Go on and do it; there need be no delay; it needs to be done this very night and I am ready for it all."

All the disciples heard this; it was not whispered into the ear of John. Not one of the disciples knew the real truth of what was meant. None imagined that Judas was to do the deed he did that night. Because Judas had the bag, they thought it was a command to buy the necessary things for the feast, or that some love-deed was contemplated by the Lord. The verse is interesting as it gives valuable information. The verse shows that the Lord Jesus Christ in His humiliation did not make use of His omnipotent power to supply the daily needs of Himself and His disciples by a miracle. We know from other Scriptures that He who had become poor for our sakes received from others means to keep Him. "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven demons; and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance" (Luke viii:2, 3). Then we learn that our Lord, out of these gifts which Judas kept, ministered to the poor. It was done, like all His gracious works, unostentatiously. In the sermon on the mount He taught "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," a command which the believer follows gladly. Whatever He preached He also practiced. Many times before He must have given instruction to Judas what to give and where to give it, without the others knowing anything about it. The surmise of the disciples suggests this also. And all along Judas was the thief. Well, remarks another, "Let us recognize the snares which attend the possession, fingering and handling of money. The man who has care of the money in our Lord's little company of followers, is the very man who makes shipwreck of his soul forever, through the love of money." "Give me neither poverty nor riches" should be a Christian's frequent prayer (Prov. xxx:8).

Then follows the mournful record "He then having received the sop went out immediately; and it was night." Judas realized now that the Lord knew all his dark and sinister plans. He disappeared at once. He could no longer remain in His presence. May he not have feared a further disclosure from the side of the Lord and an interference from the other disciples? We do not know. He left and significantly the eye-witness, the beloved disciple, tells us "It was night." It was night physically. It was night for Judas. He went out into that night and hunted up the enemies of the Lord to receive the thirty pieces of silver and to give them the needed information. That night on earth, the night of sin, ended for Judas when he committed suicide. But that did not end his night. His soul went "to his place," the place of outer, eternal and conscious darkness. In that place, that eternal prison house, he is forever and ever with no hope in all eternity. From the Gospel of Matthew we learn that our Lord sent after him that wail of deepest sorrow, when He said "It had been good for that man if he had never been born" (Matthew xxvi:24). What did our Lord mean? If it is true that man's soul is not immortal; if it is true that the wicked man is annihilated soul and body; if it is true that the wicked man has a second chance; if it is true that there is a "reconciliation" for all the lost and that all the wicked will be finally saved, then our Lord spoke a meaningless sentence. But there are not a few errorists among Christians who have accepted the foolish invention that Judas will finally, after ages of punishment, get to heaven.

Verses 31–35. One can easily imagine how the departure of Judas Iscariot must have relieved our Lord and cleared the atmosphere in the upper room where they were assembled. And now Judas was gone and only the eleven remained behind, and they were all believers in His Messiahship; they knew Him as Lord. He is free to express Himself, for the restraint which was upon Him ever since He had stooped to wash the disciples' feet was removed. Then He said, "Now has the Son of Man been glorified, and God has been glorified in Him. If God has been glorified in Him, God also shall glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him" (literal translation). The late Dr. Lyman Abbott in his Commentary on John, makes the following comment: "The phrase 'Son of Man' was a common Jewish designation of the Messiah, and would have been so understood by His disciples. They had come up to Jerusalem anticipating the coronation of the Messiah as King of the Jews. They had entered Jerusalem in triumph, hailing Him as such. Two of his disciples on the way had come to Him privately for the best offices (Matthew xx:21, 28). The twelve even had quarreled for pre-eminence as they were sitting down at the table (Luke xxii:24). The immediate object of Christ in the discourse which follows is to prepare them for the terrible revulsion of feeling, the shock of disappointment and despair which to-morrow had in store for them. He begins, therefore, with the declaration that the glory of the Messiah is already an accomplished fact. He had been glorified; by His incarnation, His life of loving self-sacrifice, His patience and His love; and in His life and character God had been glorified. Then He adds a prophecy of further glory; not that of death: not that of resurrection; not that of the ascension; but that again of being one with the Father. The Father shall glorify Him in Himself. He foresees and foretells the answer to His prayer: 'Glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was,' and for this there is to be no waiting; no delay for an earthly coronation. There must be a long interval of redeeming work before He can see the travail of His soul and be satisfied; before every knee will bow; before He can reign as King of kings and Lord of lords; but for this the Father will not wait. Immediately that His work of self-sacrifice is over, He will return to the Father, to share with Him the glory which He had from the foundation of the world."*

While this comment has some good suggestions it misses the mark in not emphasizing the Cross, the atoning work of our Lord, as that which glorifies the Son of Man, and in which He gloried. When He speaks here of being glorified it has the same meaning as in chapter xii when He said at the occasion of the inquiring Greeks, that the Son of Man is to be glorified. The context shows that it was His death, the death of the corn of wheat falling into the ground which He meant by being glorified. It is the Cross which is before Him again, the Cross and its ever blessed and unfathomably deep work, in which the Son of Man is glorified and God glorified in Him. The glorification which He beholds, yea, longs for, is His atoning death as the sinner's substitute, the death through which God would receive the highest glory, in which God's Holiness, Righteousness, Mercy, Love and Grace would be so wonderfully demonstrated and glorified. It is refreshing to see how our Lord, in looking on toward the cross, estimates that cross as the most glorious part of His work in incarnation; and so it is.

The tense of the verb, "Now has the Son of Man been. glorified" is not a difficulty. In John xvii:4 He also speaks of having finished the work, yet the work was then still unfinished. He also prayed, "I am no longer in the world," yet He was still here. He spoke these words in anticipation of the accomplished fact.

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*Commentary on John, page 170.

But what does it mean, "God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him"? This unquestionably refers to His own glorification by the Father, after His finished work, when He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. It is that acquired glory of the Son of Man with which God rewarded Him by putting Him at His right hand, by making Him the heir of all things, the glorification which the Holy Spirit so blessedly reveals in Ephesians i, Philippians ii and Hebrews i.

And now that Judas had left, He addressed His own by the endearing term "Little children." Judas, who rejected His Lordship, was not one of His children. Only those are the "little children" who are born again. Nor are the Unitarian deniers of Christ, the Christian Scientists, the Spiritists, the Theosophists, the Destructive Critics, and other rejectors of the Deity of Christ, children of God.

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." He announced in this brief statement the fact that in a very short time He would leave them and they would be left alone. Then they would wish for Him; want Him, and seek Him. He had said to the Jews, "I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come" (viii:21). He reminded them of it, that He had spoken such words to the unbelieving Jews. They were also applicable to them but in a far different sense. They could not follow Him to that place, for He was going back to the Father and to the Father's house, while they were to remain here. But soon He dispels the gloom which must have come upon them, when He spoke these mystifying words; there He promises His coming again for His own to take them to the place where He is. But in the meantime He gave them a new commandment to be kept by His own while awaiting His return, "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

This commandment is not identical with the one given in the law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Lev. xix:18). That was the commandment given to the nation Israel. A new relationship is here established, that of the family of God, later revealed as the Church, the body of Christ. The next verse shows that this new commandment is given to those who are His disciples, His own, who belong to Him, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." The measure of that love is to be His own love. Nowhere in the law is there such a command; it is indeed a new commandment, for that new relationship which He called into existence by His death and resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit, who forms this relationship. The first Epistle of John makes it a test of the family relation, and the Holy Spirit through the beloved disciple enlarges and presses home these blessed words of our Lord. "Here is our Lord leaving the world, speaking for the last time, and giving His last charge to the disciples. The very first subject He takes up and presses on them is the great duty of loving each other, and that with no common love, but after the same patient, tender unwearied manner that He has loved them. How vast the extent of Christian love ought to be! The measure and standard of it is the love wherewith Christ loved us."* And that love was a love unto death. Alas! how little we think of it! How loving and forgiving He is! How impatient and often unloving and even unforgiving His own are, never remembering that it is written, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. iii:13). It is only as we keep ourselves in His love, and remember His matchless grace towards us, that we can be enabled to manifest that love one to another. But we shall find these words again (chap. xv).

Verses 36-38. Then Peter's voice breaks in once more, even in this solemn moment. He speaks for his fellow disciples. "Lord, whither goest Thou?" With all He had spoken about going up to Jerusalem, to be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, to be crucified and raised from the dead, they did not understand. They still were in darkness about this, hence Peter's question to find out where He was going. And He answered, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterward." He was going to the place in glory where none of His own could follow Him at once, but to which all would follow Him afterwards, for this is the glorious goal of His own, to be with Him, where He is. Peter's answer still more demonstrates his ignorance of what the Lord meant; his answer is self-confident and presumptuous. "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." It was the natural heart which revealed itself in this self-confident assertion, though he meant well and showed thereby his attachment to the Lord. He thought highly of himself, of his courage and determination. He did not know his utter weakness and helplessness, nor did he remember that the Lord had told him before, that Satan had desired to sift him as wheat, and that sifting was about to take place. The Lord in His divine omniscience tells Peter what would happen that very night, and that the next sunrise would find Peter bitterly weeping. "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice." What astonishment these words must have brought to Peter's heart, perhaps more than that, gloom to him and to all the disciples. And so it came true; he denied his Lord, as the Lord had told him. Yet how marvelous His grace and kindness shine forth in all this. He knew what Peter would do; yet He loved him.

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*Thoughts on John.

CHAPTER XIV

Verses 1-3. We may imagine a brief pause between the last verse of the preceding chapter and the beginning of this new chapter. He had spoken another "Verily." It concerned Peter's coming denial. All must have weighed heavily upon the hearts and minds of the little company; each one must have felt that something was about to happen, which none of them could realize. Judas had gone out into the night; their Lord had spoken words which they were unable to grasp and to understand at the time they were spoken. That Peter, to whom they all looked as their spokesman, should deny Him thrice, when they all knew of his former confession, must have been still more troublesome to them. No doubt they were greatly troubled and perplexed. Then His loving, gracious voice broke the silence as He continued His discourse: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Wonderful words! In this awful hour of unparalleled events looming up, with Gethsemane, the betrayal, the denial, the mockeries, the cruel scourging and the shameful, painful death by crucifixion in full view, the Lord does not think of Himself. The heart trouble of His beloved disciples occupies His loving heart. Another one might have sought comfort; He seeks none, but instead comforts. Let not your heart be troubled! How precious it is to note that He did not say "hearts," but "heart"; it means that His loving comfort is for each individual heart. And God's people at all times, ever since these words were penned by the beloved disciple, have turned to this chapter and appropriated in faith the precious words which He spoke. A very old Bible in the possession of the writer, used by numerous generations for centuries, shows many of the pages in the Old Testament so clean and perfect, that it looks as if they came from the printer's press but yesterday. But the page which contains the fourteenth chapter of John is well-worn and is spotted by the teardrops of different generations. Let not your heart be troubled! It is, with the precious words which follow, the great anaesthetic of our great Physician. As a physician gives an anaesthetic to produce painlessness, so our Lord has His anaesthetic for the heart troubles, for the sorrows and bereavements of His people. Thus He speaks still to our hearts, and with these words wipes our tears away and stills our troubled hearts.

But faith is needed to receive and to enjoy this comfort. They believed on God, and He told them "believe also in Me." He was about to be rejected by the nation, delivered into the hands of the Gentiles and to be crucified. It would stumble their faith as Jews in Him, the Messiah. Therefore He said, as ye believe on God, believe in Me also. He claims for Himself the same faith and trust which belongs to God, which is perfectly right, for He is God. He was about to leave them and to go back to the Father; how necessary, then, to trust on Him, to believe on Him. Then follow some of the sweetest words which were spoken by Him: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also."

What is the Father's house? Let us remember that our Lord spoke of the temple as His Father's house. When He cleansed the temple, He said: "Take these things hence, make not My Father's house an house of merchandise" (ii:16). But that earthly house, in which once He dwelt in visible glory, was the figure of another house. In fact, the earthly house which Israel possessed was patterned after that Moses had seen on the mountain (Acts vii:44 and Heb. viii:5). The places made with hands, that is, the earthly tabernacle with its outer court, the holy part and the Holy of Holies, were the figures of the true; there is a true tabernacle which the Lord had pitched and not man (Heb.viii:2).

This great universe is the great House of God (Heb. iii:4). In that great house there is, in the third heaven, the eternal dwelling place of the eternal God. "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool" (Isa. lxvi:1). That third heaven corresponds to the Holiest in the earthly tabernacle, and the temple, which our Lord called "My Father's House." Into that place the Lord Jesus Christ went after His resurrection from among the dead; of this Father's house, the glorious home, and the home for all the family of God, purchased by His blood and fitted for that home, He speaks now. He tells us that in that blessed home, the Father's house, are many mansions. The Greek word does not mean what we understand by that word, magnificent palaces. Even the original meaning of the English word "mansion" is not a place, but a palace to abide, a dwelling place.* The same word is used again in this chapter, in verse 23, and then it is translated "abode." Since olden times the word "mansions" has been interpreted as meaning different degrees in glory. Chrysostom, Augustinus and many others taught this as it is still done by teachers, and often fanciful embellishments are added. They speak of the mansions as being located on different planets and stars, and that the most faithful on earth will receive the most glorious mansions in some star. All this has no Scriptural foundation. That there will be degrees in glory, different rewards and crowns, every Christian knows, but this is not the teaching our Lord gives when He speaks of the Father's house with its many mansions. To be in the Father's house with its eternal dwelling places is not the result of our worthiness as believers, but the fruit of His own blessed work on the cross. The Father's house is for the children of God, born again; and even the youngest and the weakest believer belongs there. And then He assured them and us that we need not fear, but be perfectly at rest about it. "If it were not so I would have told you."

Next, He speaks of going back to the Father's house to prepare a place for them: "I go to prepare a place for you." This statement of our Lord has also been surrounded with many fanciful imaginations. Some teach that this preparation of the place is now going on continually. But this is not the case. As long as He walked on earth, Paradise, the third heaven, was not fully prepared. His blessed atoning work on the cross opened the portals of the Father's house, and there He has gone a forerunner; there He is as the Priest and Advocate of His people, and thus by His death, by His entrance there as the forerunner, by His presence in the

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*Like the French *maison.*

Father's house, He has prepared the place for us. Yet there is a deeper meaning attached to this, when we think of the statement in Ephesians i:14 concerning "the redemption of the purchased possession," and of Hebrews ix:23, where it is written that the heavenly things had to be purified with better sacrifices. Not alone earthly things were defiled by sin, but even the things in this great universe, the house of God, have been affected. He Himself by His atoning work and great victory has prepared heaven for the reception of His blood-bought children. Heaven, therefore, is a prepared place for a prepared people.

"And if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." This is still more precious. He was about to leave them; they were to be left alone in the world. His going away was not a spiritual departure, but a physical one. In His resurrection, the body which He had offered on the cross came forth out of the tomb, and in that body He left the earth to go back to the Father. When He therefore tells His eleven disciples "I will come again," it surely cannot mean a spiritual coming again. Yet this is the teaching of a large number of commentaries, that "I will come again" means His spiritual coming on the day of Pentecost in the person of the Holy Spirit, hence the teaching so widespread, that the second coming of Christ happened when the Holy Spirit was given. But the Holy Spirit is the **third** Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the **second** Person of the Trinity. How, then, can the promise of the **second** Person of the Trinity to come again mean the coming of the **third** Person?

Another teaching is that when our Lord promised to come again and to receive His own unto Himself, so that they might be with Him, means the death of the believer. They tell us, when the Christian dies the Lord comes again, so that every day the coming of the Lord takes place hundreds of times, because hundreds of Christians die each day the world over. This error is clearly refuted by the fact that elsewhere in the New Testament the Spirit of God tells us that the believer's death is not the Lord coming to the dying believer, but the death of a Christian means that he goes to be with the Lord; he goes in his disembodied spirit to be with Him. For the believer to be absent from the body means "present with the Lord," and that is a conscious presence. Soul sleep, between the death of the believer and the resurrection, is a miserable invention (2 Cor. v:1-8). Paul wrote to the Philippians: "For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

And there is still another view placed upon this promise of our Lord. It is said that the Lord meant that afterward He would lift believers to share in Him the heavenly places, as revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians. When He said: "I will receive you unto Myself," He meant, they tell us, to be seated in Christ in the heavenly places. This far-fetched theory does not need an answer.

When our Lord told His disciples, "I will come again," He meant only one thing, and that is His own, personal coming again. These words cannot be logically explained in any other way.

Here is an important and unique revelation. The coming of the Lord, that is, His second Advent, is revealed in the Old Testament as a glorious, visible event. It is preceded by troubles, wars, different calamities and upheavals for Israel and the nations; even nature will be affected by it. He is predicted to come to judge the nations, to deliver the remnant of His people, to bring them to their own land, to cover that land with His glory, to establish His kingdom, to reign over the nations as King of kings, and to bring peace to the earth. Now what our Lord reveals about His second coming, reported in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) is nothing new. It is a restatement of what His Spirit taught in the Prophets and in the Psalms. What He predicts in the Olivet discourse is but a confirmation of what the Old Testament teaches about the second Advent. The great tribulation of which He speaks is the same tribulation recorded by Daniel and others, which did not happen in the year 70, but is that great tribulation which precedes His visible, personal and glorious return to earth. In other words, the references we have in the first three Gospels about His coming again all mean His personal and glorious return to the earth. The disciples are addressed there as representatives of the godly remnant of their nation at the end of this age. That remnant will wait for Him in the last days, and their hope is to see Him coming in the clouds of heaven to deliver them from the antichristian forces and to give them a promised kingdom, as Daniel states "the saints shall possess the kingdom," not Church-saints, but Jewish saints.

But here in John xiv the Lord gives a new and unique revelation; He speaks of something which no prophet had promised, or even could promise. Where is it written that this Messiah would come and instead of gathering His saints into an earthly Jerusalem, would take them to the Father's house, to the very place where He is? It is something new. And let it be noticed in promising to come again, He addresses the eleven disciples and tells them, "I will receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also." He speaks then of a coming which is not for the deliverance of the Jewish remnant, not of a coming to establish His kingdom over the earth, not a coming to judge the nations, but a coming which concerns only His own. Therefore He has nothing to say here about a preceding great tribulation, nor does He speak of signs on earth and in the heavens, nor does He describe a visible coming in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory. All He says is: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also." We repeat this is a new and unique revelation.

But if we had asked one of the eleven at that time to explain the meaning of the words of the Lord, none of their number would have been able to tell us what He meant and what that coming to be with Him is. They were ignorant of it. And even after Pentecost Peter would not have been able to explain this promise; when he mentioned the return of Christ in Acts iii:19 it is His visible coming to earth, to bring the restoration promised by the prophets, and not a coming to take His own to the place where He is.

But the full meaning of the promise of our Lord to His eleven disciples was revealed through the Apostle Paul. To him was committed the truth about the Church as the body and the bride of Christ, and with it the revelation of the heavenly destiny of the Church. It was therefore fitting that he should also be the instrument to make known by revelation "that blessed hope"—the coming of the Lord for His saints. This revelation given to him is the expansion of the words of our Lord in the passage before us. It is found in 1 Thess. iv:15-18. When Paul says in this passage, that is was spoken by the Word of the Lord, he does not mean that he cites the prophetic Word in the Old Testament, for nothing of this nature is found there. It was a direct word which he received from the Lord, revealing how the promise "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also," will be accomplished. It is still the unfulfilled promise. Saints are waiting in glory for it, and their bodies are sleeping in the dust of the earth. The living believers are waiting for it. The day is surely coming when He who spoke these words will also fulfill them. Before the great tribulation, before the days of Antichrist, before the visible manifestation of Himself takes place, He comes for His saints, to catch them up to meet Him in the air and to lead them into the Father's house.

Verses 4-7. The beautiful words of comfort and cheer had been spoken. Perhaps there was a brief pause before He continued "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." He had spoken to them before of His return to the Father's house. But it seems His words now were mostly spoken to provoke further inquiry from their side. Let us remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is omniscient. He knew their hearts, their innermost thoughts, yea He knew their thoughts from afar off (Psalm cxxxix:2). To draw them out, and move them to questions He spoke these words. Thomas then speaks. Three times we have the record of his words. In chapter xi:16, he manifested his devotion to the Lord when he suggested "let us also go, that we may die with Him." In chapter xx:24 we read of him again; here it is his unbelief in the resurrection of the Lord. On account of his unbelief he has been called "the rationalist among the disciples," but he possessed with his inclination to doubt a warm heart full of affection for the Lord. What he spoke in the passage before us was probably the uppermost thought in the heart of all the disciples. He was their spokesman. The Lord waited just for this question. It was the means of bringing forth one of the greatest utterances of our Lord. "Jesus saith unto him; I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." The words are so simple that a child can understand them. They have depths which no saint has ever fathomed. No such words were ever spoken by a human being before. No prophet ever spoke thus, and, if he had, he would have been a deceiver. The blasphemous comparison of our Lord with religious leaders of the past is often made by the rationalistic leaders in Christendom. These critics place Him on the same level with Confucius, Zoroaster, Buddha, Socrates and others. But did any of these men with their religious philosophies, if they deserve to be called philosophies, ever say anything like this? Did any religious teacher of the past ever make such a claim? If Confucius, Zoroaster or Buddha had done so they would have branded themselves as miserable liars. Nowhere do we find even a suggestion that any of these men ever uttered a word approaching the declaration of our Lord. Only one who not only knows God, but who is God, can speak such words and make such claims. We shall find later a still greater word (verse 9). If our Lord were but a human being, towering, as it is claimed today, in religious sentiment, undertaking and character, above the rest of the race, these words would convict him of self-exaltation and deception. All who deny His Deity charge Him with being untrue, in the light of this claim. The words He spoke are unique and even this fact confirms His Deity.

"*I am the way.*" This has been perverted as meaning "I am the way-shower"; I show man how to live, how to practice the golden rule. Look at Me and see in Me an expression of real manhood! I am your example, follow Me! This conception produced a number of years ago that puerile novel "What would Jesus do?" This conception has its source in the denial of the lost condition of man. What man needs is not one, in the first instance, to show him how to live, but man needs a Saviour, because he is lost, dead in sins, without strength to do anything. When our Lord declares, "I am the way" He means by it that He is the

One who has made the way for lost sinners to come back to God. As He said in the tenth chapter, "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved," meaning by it that, in virtue of His sacrificial death, He is the door through whom all must enter, so here, He is the way, because by His death on the cross, He has become the way for lost sinners, by which they can be saved and draw near to God. He is "a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Hebrews x:20).

Thus He is the way to the Father and to the Father's house with its many mansions. For those who believe on Him He is the way in which they walk.

"*I am the truth.*" This means more than being the true Messiah; it means more than revealing the truth, He is the Truth Himself. While the Word of God, the written revelation of God, is truth, He, the living Word, is *the* Truth. Whosoever knows Him knows the truth, for in Him are found all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. To know the truth means to know Him, and the more we know Him, the more we know the truth and walk in the truth.

"*I am the Life.*" He is the true God and the eternal life. He is the source and fountain of all life. This life, which He is, is imparted to the believer. The eternal life which He promises to give to those who believe on Him is He Himself. The First Epistle of John develops this great truth. We share as believers the life which He is, and that life is to be manifested, as it was manifested in His life on earth.

"No one cometh to the Father but by Me." Because He is the way, the truth and the life, there is no other way to the Father. No one else, nor anything else, can bring the lost sinner to the Father. No one can know the Father and be a child of God apart from Him. The soul which rejects Christ and does not believe in Him as the Son of God is therefore a lost soul.

"We should mark carefully what an unanswerable argument this one sentence supplies against the modern notion that it does not matter what a man believes, that all religions will lead men to heaven if they are sincere; that creeds and doctrines are of no importance; that heaven is a place for all mankind, whether heathen, Mohammedan or Christian; and that the Fatherhood of God is enough to save all at last, of all sects, kinds and characters! Our Lord's words should never be forgotten, 'There is no way to the Father but by Me.' God is a Father to none but those who believe on Christ. In short there are not different ways to heaven. There is only one way."*

"If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." To the unbelieving Jews our Lord had made previously a similar statement: "Ye neither know Me, nor My Father: if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also" (Chapter viii:19).

It has for a foundation the deep declaration of our Lord, also made in this Gospel, "I and the Father are one." Once more, as so often before in John's Gospel, He witnesses to the perfect union which is between Him and the Father. To know Him is to know the Father and the more we know Christ, the more we learn to know the Father through Him. When our Lord said, "from henceforth, ye know Him, and have seen Him," He had reference to the revelations which He was now making to them, especially in the words which follow:

Verses 8–11. How little the disciples understood Him is seen from the question of Philip. It is the Philip who had found Nathanael, to whom he gave the message: "We have found Him of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write * * * Come and see" (i:45-46). Though he knew that He is the promised Messiah, he had no understanding of the great fact, of which the Lord spoke so often, the fact of His oneness with the Father. He speaks as a Jew speaks, asking for a sign, for some visible evidence. He probably thought of the theophanies in the Old Testament, how prophets beheld the visible glory of the Lord, and he longs for such a visible manifestation. He thought if he only could get a glimpse of Him, whom their Lord called Father, it would be sufficient.

The Lord rebuked him in a tender way. "Have I been so much time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" Philip was one of the earliest disciples. For almost three years he had been in constant companionship with Him. They had journeyed together, lived together, and were intimate. All had seen His mighty works; they were the witnesses of the miracles He performed; they had seen the miraculous feeding of the multitudes, the cleansing of the lepers, the opening of the eyes of the blind, the raising of the dead. They had seen the works which only omnipotence could perform. They had listened to His words. They knew that He was the Lord. Yet Philip asked, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." He had not understood what the Lord had said, "if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also." He did not realize that He and the Father are one. We do not know if the other disciples had any deeper knowledge than Philip. But all was changed after the Holy Spirit came to take of the things of Christ to reveal them to their hearts. Then John wrote this blessed Gospel with the full revelation of the Lord and His glory. In both the Gospel and the First Epistle, he voiced the faith of his brethren: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life; that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i:1-3).

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*Ryle on John.

Then He spoke the great word concerning Himself. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

In the Old Testament the prophets beheld the visible glory of the Lord. He dwelt in the midst of His people, both in the tabernacle and in the Solomonic temple. Many times His glory was seen. Isaiah beheld Him in the temple vision; Ezekiel saw the glory and in the midst of the glorious cloud one like unto a son of man; Daniel beheld Him in His visions and saw Him face to face on the river banks of Hiddekel. They did not know that He who appeared in visible glory—whom Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and other holy men of God saw—was none other but He in whose companionship they had walked, who was speaking to them now. Through Him, God the Son, God the Father had revealed Himself in olden times. But now the Son, who is one with the Father, was incarnate. He had come to reveal the Father in His own person. Of God it is written, "Whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Timothy vi:16); "No man hath seen at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i:18); "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." And the day is coming again when His visible glory will be seen, when it will be no longer a spiritual but a physical vision. That will be in the day of His return when every eye shall see Him. The transfiguration was a foregleam of this coming glorious event.

What majestic words these are, "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"! To deny in the face of them His absolute Deity shows the awful darkness of the natural mind. How could He who was perfect in His blessed life on earth have spoken such marvelous words, and made such a claim, if it were not true that He and the Father are one! We let another speak, who alas, made such a shipwreck years after he had penned the words which we quote:

"The language of Christ here, and indeed throughout this whole discourse is utterly inconsistent with the conception of Him as a mere human or superhuman ambassador of God. He represents not merely the divine government, but the divine Being. The Father is in Him so that whoever looks within the tabernacle beholds the glory of the only begotten of the Father. He is the manifestation in the flesh, not of the divine government, but of God (1 Timothy iii:16). It is impossible to refer this answer to the mere union in sympathy and purpose of Jesus with God. No Christian, even if perfected, could say—He that hath seen me hath seen Christ. How much less then, could a Jew, though perfect, have said, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."*

His words and His works are the evidences that He is in the Father and that the Father is in Him. It is the same self-witness which we have had before in this Gospel (Chapter v). "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the very works' sake." Have faith in Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, is what the Lord tells Philip and the rest of the disciples. And in His graciousness, without any severe word of rebuke, He condescends to the weakness of His frail followers, "or else believe Me for the very works' sake." They were His credentials; by these signs He manifested Himself as one with the Father, for the works which the Father does, He did also.

Verses 12–14. The words which follow the answers which our Lord gave to the questions asked by Thomas and by Philip must be linked with the comforting assurance He gave to His disciples in the beginning of this chapter, "Let not your heart be troubled." We may look upon verses 5-11 as an interruption in the address of our Lord to His own. The "Verily, verily" of verse 12 should be connected with verse 4. He was returning to the Father and in verse 12 He speaks of the result of His going to be with the Father.

It is a great statement He gave to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto to you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he also do; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." It is one of the significant passages in the Gospel introduced by a double "verily" and which we paraphrase by "be assured it is so beyond a doubt." It is just as sure and certain as the other statements in this Gospel which begin with the same words.

But what does our Lord mean? This verse wrongly interpreted has been the fruitful soil upon which all kinds of delusive and fanatical movements have flourished. It is so still, especially in connection with the men and women who go about teaching and preaching a restoration of apostolic gifts, such as the gifts of speaking in tongues and of healing the sick.

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*Quoted from a Commentary on John, by Lyman Abbott, D. D.

The question is what did our Lord mean when He spoke of greater works that those He did on earth, which those who believe on Him should do after His departure? Did our Lord mean miracles of healing, such as He performed on earth as the evidences of His Deity and the credentials of His Messiahship? The greatest miracles our Lord did were the miracles of the resurrection of the dead. He raised the daughter of Jairus; He gave back to the widow of Nain her only son and He brought back to life the brother of Mary and Martha. The raising of Lazarus after he had been dead for four days, so that decomposition had started in, is the greatest of all His miracles. Could there be a greater miracle than that? Any sane person sees at once that our Lord could not have meant by the "greater works" the works of healing and the raising of the dead.

It is then clear that the greater works cannot mean His works of physical miracles. But it is equally clear that when our Lord said in the first part of this verse "the works that I do shall he do also" that He meant his miraculous works. He indicated thereby that when He had left his disciples, when they were to be His witnesses, testifying to Him as the Messiah, they should not be troubled about a continuation during their ministry of the same works of power and mercy, which He had shown and by which He had been attested as the Messiah-King. The same assurance He gave to His eleven disciples at the close of the Gospel of Mark. (See Mark xvi:17-20).

And these promises have been fulfilled during the lifetime of the Apostles. The "Verily" of our Lord of the verse before us is seen accomplished in the beginning of the history of the Church in the book of Acts. The sick were healed, demons were driven out and even the dead were raised.

Let us remember when our Lord sent forth His disciples with the message that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, a message which was only for the kingdom people, that is, Israel, He conferred upon the messengers His own miraculous power to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers and to raise the dead. The message of the kingdom requires outward evidences. The Jew asks for a sign and has a perfect right to do so, for signs and wonders are promised with the establishment of the kingdom as predicted by the Prophets.

Every believer who has learned to divide the Word of Truth rightly also knows that the beginning of the book of Acts starts with a message to Jerusalem, and once more the fact is presented that He who had lived amongst them, whom they crucified and whom God had raised from the dead, is the promised Messiah, Israel's King. Hence we find not yet in the beginning of Acts the full message of the Gospel of Grace and the revelation concerning the Church, but Peter's testimony is at first exclusively addressed to Israel. The call is once more "*to the Jew first*" to repent, and the promise is a Kingdom promise, the times of refreshing and the restoration of all things by the return of Him whom the heavens received. It was a repeated offer of the kingdom to the nation, so beautifully indicated in the parable of the marriage of the King's Son in Matthew xxii:1-10. And during this period, especially, we find the word of our Lord fulfilled. They did the works which He did. Many miracles took place in Jerusalem, in Judea and in Samaria as the outward evidences that the message not alone was true, but that He who had done the miracles on earth is living, risen from the dead, and that His power is undiminished. These outward evidences of the truth of Christianity continued as long as the full revelation of God had not yet been put into the hands of man. We find miracles in the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul and his associates. But as he received from the Lord the great revelations, and wrote them under the guiding pen of the Holy Spirit, these outward signs became less. Finally, when Paul wrote these marvelous documents, which complete the Word of God (in the sense of giving the highest revelation) we see him a prisoner in Rome. In the beginning of Acts the Lord did miracles in sending angels to deliver the Apostles, and later Peter, from prison. But there was no miraculous deliverance from prison in the case of the Apostle Paul.

There is no evidence anywhere in Scripture that miracles such as our Lord did in physical things, such as the healing of diseases, the cleansing of lepers, or the miraculous feeding, and the raising of the dead are to continue throughout the history of the Church. As long as the Apostles lived, to whom the promise was given, these signs were present. As long as the full truth of Christianity had not been revealed outward evidences were needed. After the Word of God had been completed by the Spirit of God in the epistolar testimony, the character of the age, as an age of faith and not of sight, was fully established, and miracles in the sense as our Lord did miracles ceased, and then begin "the greater works." Before we explain what these greater works are we wish to say that in the post-apostolic times miracle-workers arose who claimed to have power to heal and to perform all kinds of miracles. Church history reports many incidents, and the lives of the saints are filled with miraculous happenings, healing of divers diseases, manifestations of angels, and other supernatural manifestations. Periodically, movements started which claimed to be a revival of apostolic times and a restoration of miracles. All these claims were proven counterfeits and not a few of these movements became the hotbed of false doctrines and even immoralities. The present day Pentecostal movement, with its so-called miracle women and miracle men, with its false teachings, with its claims and subtle deceptions, belongs to this class. In some of these Pentecostal sects the most abominable things of the flesh under the garb of great spiritual attainments have been practiced.

But what are "the greater works" of which our Lord speaks? Our Lord did not only work physical miracles, but there were other miracles, the conversion of sinners. The conversion of a sinner is a spiritual miracle. We know from Scripture that not many more than five hundred had been gathered by His earthly ministry, who believed on Him as the Son of God and were born again. When the Holy Spirit had come on the day of Pentecost and Peter preached, three thousand miracles of grace took place. This was a greater work spiritually than He had done. And so throughout this present age over and over again through His chosen instruments, which are His gifts to His body, these greater works have been done. And these greater works are the results of His return to the Father and the subsequent coming of the Holy Spirit.

To this promise is linked the promise of prayer. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." This is another comfort with which He comforted His soon to be orphaned disciples. He heard their requests while He was with them; He knew their thoughts and their desires and graciously dealt with them. He was about to go to the Father's house to prepare the place for them, and now He gives them the promise that they can pray to the Father in His name and whatsoever they ask in His name that He will do. He had given them before the form of prayer, which is commonly called "The Lord's prayer," that is the "Our Father." His name was not mentioned in that prayer. But now in anticipation of His sacrificial work, His resurrection, His ascension and His presence at the right hand of God, He institutes prayer in His name. This fact is emphasized by Him when He said to them later in His discourse, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (xvi:24). But what does it mean, "Ask in My name"? It means more than using His blessed name in a form of prayer. In order to pray in His name it is necessary that the person is in Him and identified with Him. The phrase "in the name" as used in the New Testament generally signifies the representation of the person whose name is used, standing in his stead, fulfilling his purposes, manifesting his will and showing forth his life and glory. To pray, therefore, effectually in His name means to realize our standing in Christ, our union with Him, and seeking His glory. The mere use of the name of our Lord in prayer without the spiritual reality of our oneness with Him and deep desire to glorify Him by having His will done in our lives is unavailing. But knowing Him and bent on doing His will we can pray in His name. Whatsoever we ask must be qualified by whatsoever we ask according to His will, that which is in harmony with His will; true prayer in His name will be like His own prayer, "Not my will but thine be done."

Ever since this comforting promise was given the Lord's people have cast themselves upon it, and, pleading in simple faith, with hearts devoted to Him as their Saviour and Lord. They asked of Him and received His gracious answer. It is still the comfort of all trusting hearts, and as long as His people journey through the wilderness towards the homeland, they can test and make use of the promise. It is most blessed to come to the Father with our wants and remind Him of the words His Son spoke on earth, the encouragement He has left His people, to ask in His name and expect in faith the answer.

And in answered prayer the Father will be glorified in the Son. It means by the use of His name, by sinners redeemed by Himself, as their needs are supplied and believing prayer answered, God the Father will get glory on account of it. Then He restates the same promise: "If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it." It is most emphatic, as if He would want to remove even the slightest doubt. Just ask anything in my name and see how I will do it. In both instances He says "I will do it," while in chapter xvi:23 we read, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will do it." Prayer is to be addressed to God. When our Lord speaks that He will do it He gives another evidence to the many of this Gospel that He is God. Well said Bengel, "This 'I' indicates the glory, the glory of Him who is One with the Father."

Verses 15-20. In these words our Lord told His disciples of the gracious provision He was making for them after His departure. They loved Him. But He loved them in a measure which they could not understand. Their love was expressed by sorrow when He told them that they were now soon to be orphaned. This must be a reason why He said to them "If ye love Me keep My commandments." The test of love for Him is obedience, that is doing His will. Then follows a new revelation and promise. He had spoken to them about praying in His Name, but now He tells them, what He had not said before, that He would pray the Father in their behalf. The Greek word used here and translated "pray" is of interesting significance. Three Greek words of different meaning are translated in our English Bibles by the word pray. One means "to ask"; another "to request"; and the third "to entreat." The word used here is the word "to request." In chapters xvi:26; xvii:9, 15 and 20 the word "ask" is used. Not once does the Holy Spirit employ in connection with our Lord's praying the word "*to entreat.*" His is not the entreating petition of a creature, but the request of the Son from the Father.

His request for His own concerns the gift from the Father of "another Comforter." This word is also inadequately rendered. The Greek is a compound, Paracletos. It means to call to one's side (*Para kaleo*). It is the same word translated "Advocate" in 1 John ii:2. There it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Paraclete, the Advocate with the Father. And here He promises the third person of the Trinity to take His place in the believer as the Advocate. The statement "another" shows that the Holy Spirit is to do the same work *in* the believer as the glorified Christ does in heaven *for* the believer.

Before we take up the promise of the Paraclete and His work we call attention to the three persons of the Trinity as revealed in verse 15. The Son of God is requesting of the Father, the Father is giving as the result of the request of the Son, and the Holy Spirit comes to abide. There are some queer Bible students, as they call themselves, who refuse to believe in the Trinity, because the word does not appear in the Bible. They do not belong to Unitarians or the vicious "Latter Day Saints," known as Mormons, both of whom deny the Trinity, but they claim orthodoxy. This verse alone should deliver them from their foolish imagination, for here are three persons and the three are one.

Twice before our Lord had spoken about the future gift of the Spirit, to the woman of Samaria at the well and in the seventh chapter (verse 35). In the latter passage we read that the gift of the Spirit was dependent on His death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God. Of this condition He spoke again in chapter xvi:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." Here in chapter xiv:16 He announces for the first time definitely the gift of

Him, who would take His place in and with His own during this present age. As already stated He is to be an Advocate, one who stands alongside of those who belong to Christ, as the glorified Christ is the Advocate with the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ exercises His office as Advocate in behalf of His people when they sin. He then intercedes in their behalf. Such is also the ministry of the other Advocate, the Holy Spirit, for it is written "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans viii:26). Whatever help the believer needs in prayer, worship, witness-bearing, service, in trial, sorrow and all other circumstances, the Holy Spirit as Advocate is in the believer to cheer, comfort, lead, teach, and to give strength.

And the Lord promises Him as a permanent gift, "that He may abide with you for ever." He was present during Old Testament times. Even in the age before the deluge He manifested His power (Genesis vi:3). But never before was He present on earth as the Spirit indwelling believers and abiding for ever, without leaving them. David prayed: "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm li:11). He had seen the tragedy of Saul, the mad king, as the Spirit had left him and an evil spirit had taken His place. The New Testament Saint is assured that the Holy Spirit, given to him through grace in believing on Christ will abide with him. We are sealed by Him unto the day of redemption (Ephesians iv:30).

Our Lord describes Him as the Spirit of Truth. God the Father is Truth, the Son of God is the Truth and so is the Holy Spirit Truth, another evidence that the three persons in the Godhead are one. In his first epistle John writes, "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John v:6). He dispels the darkness and reveals the Truth concerning Him who said "I am the Truth." He teaches the Truth and guides into all the Truth, which He makes known in the written Word, of which He is the communicator. The world cannot receive this Spirit of Truth for the simple reason that the world has rejected Christ, nor can anyone receive this gift of God's Grace unless by the hearing of faith (Gal. iii:2), that is by believing on Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour, who died for our sins, was buried and arose on the third day. The natural man does not know Him, cannot see Him nor receive Him. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them" (1 Cor. ii:14).

It is otherwise with those who own Christ as their Saviour and Lord. "But ye know Him, for He abideth with you and shall be in you." It must be noted that the Lord spoke of the fact that the Holy Spirit was with them, but He announced His indwelling as taking place at some future time, for He said "He *shall* be in you." As they had believed on Christ as the Son of God, followed Him, they were born again and the Holy Spirit was with them. His personal indwelling had not yet come; that was consummated on the day of Pentecost, when the promise was fulfilled and the third person of the Trinity came to earth to dwell in the hearts of believers. And this is the blessed truth of Christianity, that all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are washed in His blood, saved by His Grace, born again, and have received the Holy Spirit. He dwells, not an influence, but a person, in every believing heart, putting His seal there of ownership. The bodies of believers are the temples of the Holy Spirit. This is not the question of seeking a personal experience of receiving the Holy Spirit, but it is the question of believing that the Word of God assures us that this is the case. "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. vi:19). Thousands of Christians today believe the false doctrine that a saved Christian must have a personal experience of a personal Pentecost, evidenced by the gift of an unknown tongue. Where does our Lord speak of this in these final words in John's Gospel? Nowhere!

Following wrong teachings concerning the Spirit of God, seeking certain influences, powers and gifts, supposing that they come from the Spirit of God, is a dangerous path to follow. It is on this territory that the enemy manifests his most awful power and garbs himself as an angel of light. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. He is here and no other Pentecost is needed. Every individual believer shares in the baptism which took place, just once, on that day and becomes through grace the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is unbelief in what God has said, if a believer seeks a special experience of receiving the Holy Spirit. The other truth connected with the gift of the Paraclete, the formation of the Church on earth, uniting believers with Christ in glory, thus constituting the body of Christ, is not taught in the Gospel of John.

And all this must be realized in faith and then expressed in a life of devotion and obedience to our Lord. Those who profess that they are in Christ, indwelled by His Spirit, His temples, and do not walk in separation, serving two masters, dishonor, grieve and quench Him, and show that their hearts know but little of true love for Christ.

"If the Spirit be come to dwell in us, the first requisite is readiness of obedience. Wondrous are the possibilities held out to us in this marvelous gift; but marvelous also is the possibility we have of belittling even a gift like this. The Galatians had it, who were giving up the Gospel for the Law. The Corinthians had it, who were carnal, and walked as men. It belongs to the mystery of our nature that we may have as though we had not. It belongs to the royalty of it that we may debase ourselves. Stranger still is it that the children of this world may be wiser in their generation than the children of light, and that the Lord should even have to put this as if a characteristic thing. Were we not unfaithful to ourselves and to God, how would the world be lighted up with the reflection of the glory that is in the unveiled face of Jesus! how we should go through the world as visitants from another sphere! Thus we need not wonder that the Lord should almost seem to put it as if the gift of the Spirit were dependent upon the reality of one's obedience. What! can we have God in us, and entertain Him so poorly? Nothing could make such a thing credible but the sad experience of so lamentable a fact! Yes, men who *know* that Christ has died for them—who *know* that the Spirit of God dwells in them—who *know* that God's way is the only way of peace and joy and power—can yet live and act as if nothing of all this were true. We can give up certainties of blessing for certainties of spiritual loss! Who can enough bewail the misery of such unaccountable folly?"*

Then follows the precious assurance, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." Though this sentence is beloved by many saints it is far from expressing the original. The correct rendering is, "I will not leave you orphans." An orphan is not without parents. Death came and deprived the child of father and mother. Then memory looks back to them and hope looks forward also to meeting them again, but the parents are not present. Such an orphaned state was before the disciples; they were soon to be solitary and friendless. He therefore assured them, "I will not leave you orphans."

But what does it mean when He assures them "I will come to you"? It has been explained as meaning His manifestation after His resurrection. But this cannot be the meaning, for their state as orphans began after His ascension. Augustine, Bede, Ryle and others apply it as meaning His second visible coming. But it cannot mean this for it was spoken to the eleven disciples as a comforting assurance during their lifetime. It seems the context gives the correct interpretation. It means the promise of verse 23, that He and the Father will come to the believer's heart to make their abode with him. It must not be detached from the promise of the indwelling Spirit; thus Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. iii:17).

"Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also." A short time only, and as far as the unbelieving world is concerned, they would no longer see Him. The last the world saw of Him was when they looked upon Him hanging on the cross between two thieves. None of the world beheld Him risen from the dead. The world will see Him some day when He comes as a thief in the night. He assured His disciples that while the world would not see Him any longer that they would see Him. To apply this to His second coming is incorrect, for it is the present tense, "ye see Me." It means the spiritual vision of Himself which the true believer has in virtue of the indwelling Spirit. It is what Paul writes in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews ii:9). Then comes the assurance of life. "Because I live ye shall live also." Into what a depth we look through this one sentence of our blessed Lord! The life which He has we have; the life of the head in glory is the life which is in every one of His members on earth, and we are the members of His body, His flesh and His bones. His life can never die, never be affected or destroyed by enemies, and such is our life. It is hid with Christ in God.

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*F. W. Grant.

"On that day shall ye know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." This day has also been explained as the day of His appearing. It is, of course, very true that in His day, when we shall be with Him, we shall know as we are known. But it is a strained view to make this verse the future day of our Lord's return. It is the day when the Holy Spirit came to make known the things which our Lord had indicated to them. He did not tell His disciples that they were going to know when the Holy Spirit comes, *how* He is in the Father, *how* they are in Him and He in them, but the fact that such is the case is to be made known to them. This is distinctly the work of the Spirit. The great Pauline Epistles reveal this blessed fact of the union of the believer with Christ.

Verses 21-26. The twenty-first verse evidently connects with verse 15, and the statement there is now fully unfolded and emphasized. It also must be linked with the preceding promise of the indwelling Spirit. The Spirit of God produces in the believer His fruits, which are the results of practical obedience. Love for Christ can only be manifested by obedience to His words; obedience therefore is the true test of love. In the First Epistle of John this test is made likewise, and John brands there those who profess to know Him, and do not keep His commandments, as liars. "He that saith I know Him and keepeth not His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him" (1 John ii:4). Many have the commandments of Christ, yet they do not keep them. Such do not give an outward evidence of real love for Him. But what are His commandments? They are all summed up in two words, "Follow me." He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John ii:6). "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii:5). One who walks in union with Christ, follows Him, will keep all His sayings, and the indwelling Spirit supplies the power to walk in the Spirit. A blessed promise is attached to this demand. "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." What a marvelous promise and what an incentive to obedience! This is the way that every believer may become a "beloved disciple." Here is a special love of the Father for those who express their love for His Son in practical obedience. How deep we may drink at this well of love! What gracious possibilities are here! Then He Himself assures us that He will love such a one and manifest Himself to him. The manifestation is, of course, a spiritual manifestation. In our days certain deluded people, given to an emotional fanaticism, claim that they have deeper experiences, that these experiences include visions and dreams, besides other supernatural manifestations. Our Lord never promised such things. That these people are not sound is shown by their unscriptural teachings, by their spiritual pride and often by worse things. The manifestation of which our Lord speaks is the consciousness of His presence with us, the satisfying knowledge that we please Him, and the precious comfort of intimate fellowship with Him. Only to those who are obedient to Him can He reveal Himself thus.

Judas's voice breaks in. Judas Iscariot was no longer present. He had gone out into that awful night to betray Him. It is the other Judas, called in Matthew's Gospel Lebbaeus, and in Mark, Thaddaeus. The Spirit of God calls attention to the identity of Judas, that he was not Iscariot, the betrayer, who said, "Lord." Judas Iscariot never addresses Jesus as Lord, because he did not believe on Him as the Son of God. His question literally translated is "Lord, and what has happened that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, but not at all to the world?" One can easily read in this question the disappointed Jewish Hope. Had they not followed Him as the Messiah, the King of Israel? Had they not announced that the long-promised kingdom is at hand? He and the other disciples expected that He would manifest Himself as King with power and glory before all Israel and the nations of the world. And now He had announced that He would manifest Himself only to the disciples. What had happened? He was greatly perplexed, not understanding the deep spiritual meaning of the words of the Lord.

Our Lord, therefore, speaks words similar to those recorded in verse 21: "If a man love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The spirit of obedience is again made prominent and here it is not keeping His commandments, but keeping His Word (not words). Keeping the Word, being obedient to it, has attached to it one of the greatest promises. The Father and the Son promise, "We will come and make our abode with him." This is, of course, a spiritual coming and abiding in the heart of the obedient believer. It is the highest and the best manifestation promised to the child of God, to become the dwelling place of the Father and the Son. The realization of this promise is conditioned on obedience to His Word. Well has another said, "In God's ordered path alone can we find God. In His marked out way it would be *impossible not* to find Him." And when our Lord said, "*We* will come," He testifies again to His unity with the Father.

Then follows the same truth presented negatively: "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings." But there is more than that involved. One who does not love Him and shows his character by not keeping His sayings does more than reject His words, he rejects the Father whose words the Son declared. "Where there is no obedience to Christ, there is no love. Nothing can be more plain than our Lord's repeated warnings that practical obedience, keeping His commandments and sayings, doing His will, is the only sure test of love to Him. Without this obedience, profession, talk, knowledge, church-membership, yea, even feeling, conviction, weeping and crying, are all worthless things."

And as they listened with their ears to all these words of comfort and instruction, their hearts did not grasp the meaning of what He was saying to them. He told them that the time would come when they would know and understand. "But the Comforter (Paraclete) which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." The person of the Holy Spirit, the other Advocate in their behalf, would supply their lack of understanding. Through this coming One they would remember all these things; He would teach them and lead them into the things of Christ, even as He has done and still does through the blessed redemption truths, as taught by Him in the Epistles. The promise that the Spirit would bring all things to their remembrance vouches for the perfect accuracy of the four Gospels. "It is in the fulfillment of this promise to the Apostles that their sufficiency as witnesses of all that the Lord did and taught, and consequently the authenticity of the Gospel narrative is grounded."

Verses 27–31. He gives them a legacy: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." About to leave the world and go back to the Father, He made His will and bequeathed to His own the priceless treasure of peace. But we must notice the difference between the peace He left and the peace He gives; the latter He calls "My peace." He made peace in the blood of the cross. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v:1). Peace with God is the legacy of His death for all who trust in Him. It is the peace He made and which we cannot make nor maintain. It is ours as the gift of grace, a peace which can never be undone. But there is also "the peace of God" of which we read in Phil. iv:7. This peace of God is the same as the peace He promises to give and which is His own peace. While the peace with God is the result of having accepted Christ as Saviour, His peace is dependent on obedience to Him and communion with Him. The Holy Spirit is given to dwell in the believer so that the believer may know and enjoy His own peace. The peace of God is that peace which God possesses in the serenity of His being, and, because Christ is God, He had this marvelous peace which nothing could disturb. He stood unmoved and unperturbed in the courts of Caiaphas and in the judgment hall of the Roman Pilate. We behold nothing but calmness in His blessed life. When the waves began to fill the little ship and the disciples cried out for fear, He knew no fear, but rested in perfect peace on His pillow. When they wanted to cast Him down some mountain side, or picked up stones to stone Him, He remained undisturbed. He trusted God and knew the issues of all. Hence this majestic peace.

We see the promise realized in the beginning of the history of the Church on earth. It enabled the Apostles to stand fearless and unmoved before the threatening Jewish authorities. It gave to Stephen a heavenly calmness in the midst of the shower of stones. Peter, having "His peace," slept peacefully in chains. Paul and Silas, in possession of the peace of God, sang praises at midnight, and Paul remained undisturbed, surrounded by the Jerusalem mob, as he was unmoved when the shipwreck was about to take place. It was His peace, which kept the millions of martyrs, and enabled them to meet the lions and the tigers with a song of praise. Such is His blessed legacy. We also may enjoy it all as we do His will and rest in Him. The formula for it is simple. "Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv:6-7).

Then there is the second, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Here is the true remedy for fear. It is His peace in a life of trust and obedience.

In verse 28 He refers to His words in chapter xiii:33-36 and xiv:2,3,12. In view of His going away and the promise of His return, instead of being grieved, they should rejoice, for He went back to the Father to represent them in His presence, and finally He would return and take them to the Father's house with its many mansions. What did our Lord mean when He said "for My Father is greater than I"? Unitarians and other anti-trinitarians use it as one of their star texts to uphold their unscriptural theories. Is this statement not inconsistent with the many declarations in this Gospel as to His perfect unity with the Father? He who is one with the Father had taken the place of a servant; He became man. As such He was sent forth by the Father, derived His authority from the Father, obeyed the Father, did the Father's will. The Lord Jesus Christ while very God, is God manifested in the flesh, and God in His absolute Being is greater than any manifestation of Him. God absolute is more than God revealed. An ancient creed states, "Christ is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood."

He had told them before what would take place. Afterward they would remember it all, as they did when they believed. His words would be few for the time of His passion was almost at hand.

Significant is the statement, "The prince of this world cometh and has nothing in Me." He does not say that His enemies are coming, but He mentions but one person, Satan, the Devil. And he is "the prince of this world." What an important statement from the lips of the Son of God! In his first epistle John tells us that the whole world lieth in the wicked one. Sin has made Satan the ruler over fallen man, and the system which man builds up is alienated from God. And when the world rejected Christ this sinister being became "the god of this world," or age (2 Cor. iv:4). He came before to the Son of God with his tests, but found nothing in Him. All he tried to do to keep Him back from doing the will of God in redemption resulted in defeat. There was nothing in our Lord which in any way could respond to the Devil's suggestion, for our Lord was absolutely sinless in His human nature. And now Satan came for the final assault and found only another defeat.

"But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." He was ready to go to the cross and thereby show His love for the Father, by being obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

CHAPTER XV

The last sentence of the previous chapter is, "Arise, let us go hence!" A number of expositors think that our Lord arose from the place where He had washed the disciples' feet and where He had spoken all these precious words, and that He moved onward towards Gethsemane. On the way there He continued to talk to the disciples till at some convenient place He offered His great prayer in their presence, after which Judas, with the band of men and officers, appeared to arrest Him. We do not share this opinion. It is almost inconceivable that our Lord should have spoken the great words contained in chapters xv and xvi in the act of walking in the night. It would also have been quite impossible for all the eleven disciples to have heard Him if He walked ahead of them. But the first verse of chapter xviii contradicts the view that He left the room and walked across Kedron to Gethsemane. "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Kedron, where was a garden into which He entered, and His disciples."

But if He did not leave the place, what did He mean when He said, "Arise, let us go hence"? It must have a symbolical meaning. He was about to leave the world, for Him, though He is the creator of all, a strange place. Repeatedly in His discourse and also in His prayer He mentions the world. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit (xiv:17). Only to His own and not to the world is He manifesting Himself (xiv:21,22). He giveth, not as the world gives (xiv:27). The world hates Him and those who belong to Him (xvi:18). They are the chosen ones out of the world, and therefore separated ones (xvi:19). They are not of the world even as He is not of the world (xvii:16). He was leaving the world to go back to the Father, and for His own it becomes also the strange place, no longer their home. While they are in the world they are not of it and must be separated from it. They must take their places with Him. This is the spiritual meaning of the words He spoke and what follows in His teaching confirms this.

Verses 1-8. He speaks to them in a parable. Those who teach that He left the chamber where He had taught, say that the parable was suggested by the vineyards on the way to Gethsemane; others say that over the great doors of the temple there was an immense vine carved, and that this vine was in the mind of the Lord when He uttered these words. We must look for a deeper reason. Every student of the Word of God knows that Israel is symbolized by the three trees, the Olive, the Fig-tree, and the Vine. These three trees are mentioned together for the first time in Jotham's parable, in which they typify Israel; and the bramble, the Gentiles (Judges ix:7–15). Asaph speaks of Israel thus: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, Thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it" (Psalm lxxx:8). Through Jeremiah the Lord declared "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?" (Jeremiah ii:21).

Ezekiel speaks of Israel as the vine (Ezekiel xv:2). Hosea bears witness against Israel under the figure of the vine. Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according unto the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images" (Hos. x:1). But above all Isaiah has a great message on Israel as the vine and the failure of Israel. It is the song of the vineyard contained in chapter v:1-7. He pictures first what the Lord did for Israel as the vine, and then pictures Israel's failure. "Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Then judgment is announced. "I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down." The fulfillment of all this was at hand. Israel was about to crown its shameful history by casting out the Son who had come to the vineyard and by killing Him (see Matthew xxi:33–41). Israel as the vine had completely failed; its judicial blindness and world-wide dispersion was near, not far away.

But here is the *true* Vine. Israel is called in Isaiah "the servant of the Lord"; they failed, but Christ is the true servant. He is the true Israel (Isaiah xlix) and He is the true Vine, as He is the true Light and the true Bread. Upon the failure of Israel He announces Himself as the true vine, and those who believe on Him as branches. What then is the meaning of this parable? In the interpretation of it we must first of all remember the purpose of a parable. It is to illustrate a great principle by certain figures and pictures. To apply each part of a parable to something definitely, or give it a literal interpretation has done much harm. "Let us, instead of perplexing ourselves with minor details, bear in mind that in interpreting each of our Lord's parables, the great purpose for which it was delivered is ever to be born in mind, if we would understand it rightly."* To base some great doctrine on the figure of speech in a parable would lead, in some instances, to confusion. What is the purpose of this parable? The most prominent word is the word "fruit." Six times we find this word and it leaves us therefore not in doubt that the purpose of the parable is fruit-bearing. Israel, the vine, had brought forth wild grapes; Israel, the fig-tree, had nothing but leaves; the branches of the olive tree were unbelieving and had to be broken off. But now the true source of fruitfulness for God is made known. It consists in living union, in the closest identification with Christ. This fact was prophetically hinted at in Hosea. There it is said of Ephraim, Israel, which had joined itself to idols, that in some future day they will say, "What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard Him, I have seen Him . . ." Then the Lord says: "From Me thy fruit is found" (Hosea xiv:8). And when the Holy Spirit after the departure of our Lord unfolds the fulness of Christianity, we read of the truth taught in this parable in the Epistle to the Romans. At the close of the sixth chapter of this great Epistle we read of believers being made free from sin, bearing fruit unto holiness. That this fruit is not produced by law-keeping, by the use of the law, to which the true believer is dead, is the teaching in the beginning of the seventh chapter. Then we read: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married unto another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, *that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*" This is the great truth the Lord illustrates in the parable of the vine and the branches. The marriage union is used in Romans to illustrate the same principle. The law could not produce fruit, but being married to Him who is risen from the dead, identified with Him, results in fruit bearing.

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*Dean Bourgon.

Christ, not in incarnation, but risen from the dead, the corn of wheat, which fell into the ground and died, is the source of life and power, the source of true fruit unto God. This is the meaning of the figure "the true vine." Those who believe on Him, accept Him as Saviour, are consequently born again, and thus receiving the new nature, eternal life, are constituted branches of the vine. The life and nature which is in the vine is in the branch. The condition of fruit-bearing is that the branch abide in the vine. If the branch is not in the vine, the sap in the vine does not circulate in the branch; there can be no fruit and the branch withers and is dead; the only thing it is good for is to be cast into the fire and to be burned. The secret of fruit-bearing is, therefore, as mentioned repeatedly, to abide in Him and He in us, for without Him we can do nothing.

But while He calls Himself the true vine, He also speaks of the Father as the husbandman. The vine needs the care of the husbandman, as also do the branches. We must not overlook the fact that the Son of God came to earth and brought fruit also unto God in dependence on the Father. He testified to this fact when He said: "The Father who abideth in Me doeth the works." As the Father was in Him, and He in the Father, so the true believer is in Christ, and Christ in him. To abide in Him means the continued exercise of faith in Him, that faith which is the very breath of the new nature, which realizes constantly that Christ is all, that depends on Him for everything and knows its utter helplessness apart from Him. As a result of such dependence the believer clings close to Him and lives the life of close and intimate communion with Him. This is the true abiding in Him, and explains the meaning of His words: "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing." But what is the fruit? The fruit which the branch bears is the fruit of the vine. It is the fruit of Himself, produced by the indwelling Spirit, the fruit which is like the true vine Himself; it is Christlikeness. If this fruit is lacking it is an evidence that the branch is lifeless.

"Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit . . . If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Here we face a difficulty. How can these statements be reconciled, some ask, with the teachings of Scripture of the perseverance in faith of the children of God, that a true believer can never be lost? The verses we have quoted have been used by many an Arminian theologian to contradict what so many other passages teach, that is, the eternal security of all believers.

The branches which bear no fruit, which are taken away and finally perish do not represent true believers at all. Whenever a person takes upon himself the profession of a Christian, he claims by that outward profession to take the place, the position, the privileges and responsibility of a believer in Christ. He is in his profession a follower of Christ, a separated one and also a branch in the vine. But while his profession in churchmembership indicates all this, in reality this person is only nominally a follower of Christ, only nominally a branch in the vine, only nominally identified with Christ. He has not the reality of it, he does not possess what he has taken upon himself in profession, for he was never born again. As a result there is no fruit, because there is no life. Such a professing branch is here in view, a branch joined to the church by profession, but not joined to the Lord by a living faith and the power of the Spirit of God. That there are thousands upon thousands of such branches, dead and unfruitful in the professing church, does not need any demonstration. It is only too evident. Such will be taken away in judgment. But the real branches are purged (or cleansed) by the Father, to bring forth more fruit. The evidence of being a living branch in the vine is the fruitage, and the Father who desires fruit does to the true believer what the husbandman does to the branch, in cutting away and cleansing, so that there might be more fruit. The cleansing is by the Word, and the different disciplines are providences which the Father graciously uses with His beloved children.

In verse 6, the solemn warning, it must be noticed that our Lord changes his words from "ye" to "any one." He does not say "If ye (His disciples as true believers) abide not in Me," but, He says: "If any one (or man) does not abide in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned." This change of address is significant and conclusive. The Lord thereby indicates that His true disciples are not meant by Him. He would not have it supposed that it might be possible for those who belong to Him, the gifts of the Father, in whom His own life dwells, to be cast forth and to share the fate of the wicked. In the next verse He speaks again of His true disciples, and not of a mere professor. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Here is one of the secrets of effectual prayer, conditioned on our nearness to Him.

"The doctrine here laid down and implied is a very remarkable one. There are some Christians whose prayers are more powerful and effectual than those of others. The nearer a man lives to Christ, and the closer his communion with Him, the more effectual will his prayers be. The truth of the doctrine is so self-evident and reasonable, that no one on reflection can deny it. He that lives nearest to Christ will always be the man that feels most, and prays most earnestly, and fervently, and heartily. Common sense shows that such prayers are most likely to get answers. Many believers get little from God, because they ask little, or ask amiss. The holiest saints are the most earnest in prayer, and they consequently get the most."*

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*Bishop Ryle.

In bearing much fruit, His Father is glorified, and in glorifying Him, whom the Son glorifies, we give evidence that we are His disciples.

Verses 9-11. Could there be a greater comforting assurance than that which our Lord gave to His disciples and to us as well, contained in the ninth verse? "As the Father hath loved Me so have I loved you; continue ye in My love." He was the Father's delight and the object of His love. Who can measure the love which the Father has for the Son? And His own are now the objects of the love of the Son of God in the same degree as He is beloved by the Father. Believers are the "Beloved of God called Saints" (Rom. i:7). But in order to know this love, to enjoy it, we must continue, abide in His love. What it means to abide in His love is made known in the verse which follows. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." He walked in obedience as Man; His meat and His drink was to do the will of Him that sent Him, thus He abode in His Father's love. This must be the path of His own. It is in practical obedience that we abide in His love; without it there can be no assurance and enjoyment of His love. "Hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John ii:3). And if we fail in this practical obedience, as we often do, we flee to Him with confession and self-judgment and find that His mighty, loving advocacy restores us to the fellowship which disobedience severed. We call attention to the little word "as." It is used by our Lord several times in these chapters. *As* the Father loveth Him so He loveth us. *As* He kept His Father's commandments so we are to keep His commandments. *As* He is not of the world, even so are we not of the world (xvii:16). *As* the Father sent Him into the world even so has He sent us into the world.

The blessed purpose of all these words is that His joy might remain in us and that joy in us might be full. He had spoken of His peace, the legacy He has left (xiv:27) and now He speaks of His "joy." His is the greatest joy, the joy of the Redeemer, who has accomplished redemption. This was the joy set before Him, for which He endured the cross and despised the shame (Heb. xii:1-3). We can share His joy, and as we walk in His blessed steps, following Him as our pattern, abiding in Him and in His love, our joy in Him will be full. We rejoice with Him in the things in which He rejoices.

Verses 12-16. In chapter xiii:34 He had given the new commandment that believers should love one another; this He repeats and adds again the measure of that love, "*as* I have loved you." The Holy Spirit in the Epistle to the Colossians speaks of true Christian conduct, "Forbearing one another and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, *even as* Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. iii:13). If the words of our Lord were always practiced and this admonition of the Spirit of God obeyed, there would never be any disagreement or unpleasantness amongst God's people. Some one writes: "The crossness, spitefulness, jealousy, maliciousness and general disagreeableness of many high professors of 'sound doctrine' are a positive scandal to Christianity. Where there is little love there can be little grace." With these words we fully agree.

Then He spoke to them as His friends. They were Jewish believers, and as such under the old dispensation they were servants, but grace made them His friends (Gal. iv:1-7). The manifestation of the greatest love is to lay down the life, that is self-sacrificing love, dying for His friends. This love He manifested towards them by dying in their stead, and though He called them His friends, by nature they were, as we all are, enemies by wicked works, and as such we need His propitiatory death. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v:6-8). Such is the example of His love. And self-sacrificing love must be the measure of our love towards our brethren. Our relationship to Him as friends demands obedience.

While it is true that every believer is a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, the word servant in verse 15 refers to the state of Jewish believers under the law. Identified with

Him He constitutes us His intimate friends and introduces us to all things He has heard of the Father, making known to the believer's heart through the Scriptures the deep things of God. We are reminded here of Abraham, not under the law-covenant (the law came 430 years after), but under the grace-covenant, that the Lord made the secret things known to him. Abraham is called the friend of God (Isaiah xli:8; James ii:23). The Lord came to Him in the garb of man and then said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" And let us remember in that theophany the same One was revealed to Abraham who talked to these sons of Abraham in these blessed words.

"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name He may give it you." The choice here means both the choice of eternal election to salvation and to the office of apostles. We did not seek Him, but He sought us when we were lost and completely undone. What a precious assurance it is, not that we have chosen Him, but that He has done so. The following remarks by the late Bishop J. C. Ryle give additional suggestions on this verse:

"When our Lord says, 'I have chosen and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit,' I think He refers to the work of conversion and building a church in the world. 'I chose and set you apart for this great purpose, that ye should go into all the world preaching the Gospel, and gathering in the harvest and fruit of saved souls; and that this work begun by you might remain and continue long after your deaths.' And then to encourage the eleven, He adds, 'It was part of my plan that so bringing forth fruit, ye should obtain by prayer everything that ye need for your work.' "

Verses 17-21. When our Lord says "these things I command you," He had reference to all these instructions He had given to them. He speaks next of the identification of Himself with His disciples. The blessed truth He states, the oneness of the believer with Himself, is fully made known in the Pauline epistles. For the first time He states the great fact that believers in Him, those who are the gifts of the Father, whom He hath chosen out of the world, are not of the world. In His highpriestly prayer we shall return to this great statement. He was not of the world, and those who are born again, in possession of the divine nature, are not of the world, even as He is not of the world. Because He is not of the world, the world which lieth in the wicked one hates Him, and it hates equally all who belong to Him. Alas! how little of this hatred from the side of the world is known today to true believers. Has the world changed? Is it no longer the evil world? Is it a different world from what it was 2,000 years ago? Is it no longer in the wicked one? The world does not change in its moral aspect; it is the same evil age it has always been. Satan is still the prince of this world, and the god of this age. The world does not improve; it still hates Christ. But the trouble is with believers. They do not live out their separation. They have forgotten the fact that believers are dead to the world and the world dead unto them. Nor are exhortations like James iv:4 and 1 John ii:15-17 heeded. If we live as separated ones, bearing a definite witness in our lives as to our place in Christ, we soon shall find that the words of our Lord are still true. The servant is not greater than His Lord. They hated Him, they would hate them; they persecuted Him, and the disciples would also be persecuted.

Verses 22-27. In verses 22 to 25 He gives a resume of the three years now closing He had spent in the midst of His people. He had spoken to them the words of life, revealed the truth, warned them, invited them, yea, He would have gathered them as a hen gathers her chickens, yet they would not. They compassed Him about with words of hatred; for His love they became His adversaries (Psalm cix:3-4). They hated Him, they hated His Father. He had done His mighty works and the works of the Father; they had seen both and hated both. Their own Scripture had been fulfilled, they hated Him without a cause (Psalm cix:3).

Another announcement of the soon coming of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, sent by Him from the Father, the Spirit of truth, follows. When He comes He will testify of Him. This is the great work of the Holy Spirit, to bear witness to Christ. Chapter xvi:13-15 enlarges upon this. And when He has come, they also would be enabled to bear witness, on account of their association with Him from the beginning of His ministry. This promise is repeated by Him after His resurrection: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts i:8).

CHAPTER XVI

Verses 1–7. The chapter division at this point is unfortunate. There should be no break between the last verse of the preceding chapter and the beginning of the sixteenth. He had informed them of the world's hatred; it would be the same hatred with which the world hated Him. Linked with this information is the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit to testify, and to enable them to be witnesses. The thought might have arisen in their minds that the coming of that Spirit would change things as far as the world is concerned. He guards them against such a false hope and gives a prophetic warning so that they might not be offended. He announces that they would be put out of the synagogue. Such an excommunication carried with it the meaning of a complete cutting off from the nation and the national hope, so that the Jew who was treated thus was considered outside, like a heathen. It meant the loss of everything. The blind man whom the Lord healed (chapter ix) had been cast out of the synagogue. Such was to be their fate. But He predicts more than that. They would be killed, and their death would be considered service for God. This prophecy has been fulfilled in the entire history of the Church. Saul of Tarsus, the young Pharisee and son of a Pharisee, persecuted the Church and wasted it. He made havoc of the Church, entering every house and hailing men and women and committing them to prison, and consenting to Stephen's death (Acts viii:1-4). He thought it was zeal for God, for he testified later "concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. iii:6). And when this erstwhile persecutor had been saved, he also found out the truth of these words. The Jews hated him; they persecuted him, scourged him and tried to take his life, thinking, as he did once, that they were serving God. Behind all persecutions stands the liar and murderer from the beginning, that is, the devil. During the Middle Ages, when the papal persecutions swept over many lands, when the horrible inquisition ruled, with its satanic tortures, and countless thousands were put to a cruel death, popes, bishops and priests acted as murderers under the satanic delusion that they were serving God and the Church.

The future will bring another fulfillment of the words of our Lord, for during the coming great tribulation pious Jews, who believe on Jesus as their Messiah, their coming King, will be martyred again. The prophet Daniel (chapter ix:19-22) and the book of Revelation (chapter xiii) tell us of this. He is forewarning them and those who came after them, yea, His whole Church, what they were to expect during this present evil age. He did not speak of these things in the beginning, when they first followed Him, so as not to discourage them, but now He told them what the unbelieving Jews and the hating world would do unto them.

He told them that He was going back to Him who sent Him, and perhaps mournfully He added, "None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?" It is true Peter had asked the question, but at best it was just a question of inquisitiveness and not a desire to lay hold on the deeper meaning of His return to the Father. Instead of asking of Him more about that place to which He said He would soon go, and the future glory of which He had spoken, they were only moved by the thought that He would leave them; on account of this their hearts were filled with sorrow. His going away was expedient for them. "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." His going away meant, of course first of all, His sacrificial death on the cross, followed by His burial, His triumphant resurrection and His glorious ascension, when He took the place on the right hand of God. As a result of His blessed work, the third person of the Trinity came down to earth, to take His place in and with His own. The presence, that is, the omnipresence of God the Holy Spirit in the true Church, and in every individual believer, is a better thing than the continued presence of our Lord on earth, in His state of humiliation. In this sense it was beneficial for them that He should go away.

"The presence of the Holy Spirit is a greater comfort and advantage to us than the presence of Christ in the flesh. Christ's bodily presence was comfortable, but the Spirit is more intimately a Comforter than Christ in His fleshly presence; because the Spirit can comfort all believers at once in all places, while Christ's bodily presence can comfort but few, and that only in one place at once. The benefit of Christ's presence was great, but the advantage of the Spirit's renovation and holy inspiration is much greater."

Verses 8–15. What the effect of the presence of the Holy Spirit means in the world is now taught by our Lord. These words are generally misunderstood. The common interpretation is that the Holy Spirit convinces people that they are lost sinners, that they need righteousness and also convinces them of a coming judgment. Conviction of sin is certainly the work of the Holy Spirit, who also quickens those who believe, but this is not the teaching of the passage before us in this paragraph. Much depends on the right rendering of the word "reprove." It has not the meaning of an inward conviction, but rather means a conviction by demonstration. It means conviction by an unanswerable argument. The Holy Spirit on earth is the convicting demonstration of the world's sin, for having cast Him out, and rejecting the Lord of Glory, and having not believed on Him. The world therefore is under condemnation and the Holy Spirit in His presence on earth bears witness to it. Then the presence of the Holy Spirit is the convicting demonstration of righteousness, because He has gone to the Father. The Son of God who lived the life of perfect righteousness on earth, who pleased God always, was condemned by the world as an unrighteous man. They cast Him out and all was done in the name of God. Perhaps some of them stood before the Cross when that dread darkness enshrouded the Lamb of God and heard the cry "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and they may have imagined a vindication of their awful deed. But God in His righteousness acted in His behalf. He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. He rewarded Him who had been obedient to Him in His holy life, obedient unto death, the death of the cross. The world sees Him no more but the presence of the Holy Spirit demonstrates His righteousness and is the convicting argument that He is at the right hand of God. And therefore but one thing remains for the unbelieving world with its guilt, and that is judgment. Already the prince of this world is judged, though the full sentence of judgment in the all-wise purpose of God is not yet executed. The Holy Spirit on earth therefore is the convicting evidence of that coming judgment.

The many things which were on His loving heart they could not understand in their present condition. The coming of the Spirit would bring to them the revelation of these things. He is the Spirit of truth and therefore He will lead into all truth. The word truth, means both the written Word and the living Word. The Spirit has come to guide us into all truth, the truth as it is revealed in the Bible. Believers, many of whom are found in certain Pentecostal sects, who believe and teach that there is a Spirit-guidance independent of the Bible, by inward impressions, by dreams and visions, are deluded. Some have gone so far as to declare that their inward experiences are sufficient and that they have no more need to study the Word of God. And the Word of God, which is truth, witnesses of Him Who *is the* Truth. It is noteworthy that in the Greek the word truth in the above passage has the definite article—He shall guide you into all the truth. Through the written Word He guides to Him Who is the Truth, our Lord.

He does not speak from Himself, that is in independence from the Father and the Son. His testimony is the testimony of the Father and the Son, as the Son on earth heard the Father's voice and spoke of that which He heard from the Father. Furthermore, He will show things to come. This was fulfilled in the inspired witness of the Apostles, Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude all bore a prophetic testimony; they prophesied concerning the future of the church, the evils to come, the coming of Christ and the day of the Lord. Let no one therefore think that the Holy Spirit continues now to give prophecies through individuals.

He has shown the things to come in the completed Word of God and we must turn there to know these future events.

But His great work is to glorify Christ. Hereby may be known the real ministry of the Spirit, when Christ is exalted. The Book of Acts is a witness to all this. Peter on the day of Pentecost exalted Christ by the Spirit who filled him and used him as His mouthpiece. Every leading testimony in the Acts has but one theme, Christ. The heart filled with the Spirit, governed by Him, has but one ambition, to glorify Christ. And all things which are Christ's, the glory the Father has given to Him, He will show to those who abide in Christ.

Verses 16–24. What did our Lord mean when He said to His sorrowing disciples "A little while, and ye shall not see me" and "a little while and ye shall see me"? What is the meaning of "a little while"? It has been applied to His death and resurrection in the sense that He meant it would be a little while until He would die and be buried, a little while and they would see Him in resurrection. This view is untenable. Equally so is the view that the Lord meant by "the little while," the time when they would see Him, His second coming.

It is true the same expression in the original is used in Hebrews x:37, where it undoubtedly means the return of our Lord, but this in itself is no proof at all that it must mean the same in this verse. If we consult the original language, we find that there are used two different verbs translated with "see." The first "see" has the meaning of beholding with the physical eye; the second, used in the sentence "a little while and ye shall see Me," has the meaning of "perceiving"—that is, a spiritual vision. Inasmuch as the Holy Spirit employs these two words, the first one meaning an external perception by the physical eye, the other meaning a spiritual perception, our Lord could not have meant His second coming. It must be interpreted as the coming of the Holy Spirit to take His place as the other Comforter. Through his office and work the believer beholds Him in faith who has gone to the Father. Such was the effect of the Holy Spirit's filling Stephen. "But he being full of the Holy Spirit, looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts vii:55). His, of course, was an actual vision, but the Holy Spirit in the believer gives the spiritual vision of Christ in glory.

This saying of our Lord occasioned new questionings among the eleven disciples. They were greatly puzzled about the expression, "a little while."

They frankly confessed that they did not know what He was speaking about. When they were thus conversing among themselves, they probably stood by themselves, withdrawing from the Lord a little distance. But He, the omniscient One, knew what they were talking about and what was on their hearts, and that they were anxious to ask Him. After stating Himself their perplexity, He said to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." It is another "verily" with which He introduced this prophetic statement. The word used for weeping is the general word for external expression of grief; the word lament means to wail, and is used in connection with the hired mourners at funerals (see Mark v:38; Luke xxiii:27); the word sorrowful expresses the inward feeling of the heart. Such were for the disciples the emotions connected with His death, the ignominous death of the cross, while the world, their enemies, exhibited a malignant joy. But the words of our Lord picture also the conditions prevailing throughout this age, the age called elsewhere, Man's day. This age is for true believers an age of sorrow, weeping and lamentation, while the self-secure world, blinded by the god of this age, goes on with seeming joy.

This view is supported by His own words in Matthew ix:15, "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast."

He speaks of a woman. When she is in travail to give birth to a child she is in sorrow, "but as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." This also refers to this age and the anguish and sorrow for His true people, looking forward to the time when all groaning, sorrow and pain ends for His waiting Church, when all His own, in the day of His coming again, will see Him as He is. Then the joy begins which will never end. These words also have a more special meaning in connection with the close of the present age. Before the great promised regeneration takes place, when He will take His own throne (Matthew xix:28), there will be a great travail in pain and sorrow among the remnant of His people Israel. Of this the prophetic Word speaks repeatedly in passages like Isaiah xxvi:17; lxvi:7, Hosea xiii:13 and especially Micah iv:9–10. Then the remnant of God-fearing Jews, typically represented by the eleven, will be delivered by His glorious manifestation.

The verse division in verses 23 and 24 obscures the real meaning. The first sentence of verse 23 must be added to verse 22, and the last sentence of verse 23 belongs to verse 24. We read it correctly in this wise: "But I will see you again (at His coming glory) and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you. In that day (of His return) ye shall ask Me nothing." The word "ask" is a different word from that used in the second half of verse 23. It means to ask questions, such as they were asking. In that coming day all believers shall know, as they are known, and shall look no longer in a glass darkly. Therefore, He said that in that day they will have nothing more to ask.

Then we read verse 24 in this wise: "Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will give it to you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." It is the last "Verily" in the Gospel of John, in which this blessed word of precious assurance is so frequently used. It concerns prayer and its blessed use, after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Up to now they had prayed the prayer which any pious Israelite might pray, that form of prayer which He gave them on their request to teach them to pray, as John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray. From now on they were to pray in His name. And what a marvelous privilege it is—the God-given means of a full joy. The saintly Gerhard spoke of prayer as follows:

"The benefit of prayer is so great that it cannot be expressed!—Prayer is the dove which when sent out, returns again, bringing with it the olive-leaf, namely peace of heart. Prayer is the golden chain which God holds fast, and lets not go until He blesses. Prayer is the Moses' rod, which brings forth the water of consolation out of the rock of salvation. Prayer is Samson's jawbone, which smites down our enemies. Prayer is David's harp, before which the evil spirit flies. Prayer is the key to Heaven's treasures."

Verses 25–33. This paragraph records the final words of the memorable discourse of our Lord, preceding the greatest of all, His intercessory prayer. He reminds them first that He had spoken all these things in proverbs, or figures, showing that He knew how unable they were to comprehend all. But this would soon be changed, when He would show them plainly the Father. What time is this? No doubt the time when the Holy Spirit came to earth. The entire dispensation of the Spirit has brought to believers the full knowledge of the Father and the Son. The Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of the believer is the distinctive revelation given to the believing heart by the Holy Spirit. "And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv:6). "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii: 15, 16). Once more prayer in His name is mentioned by Him and the assurance given of the Father's love, and that He will hear those who come to Him in His name.

Verse 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father," is a most important declaration. It is a summary of the whole Gospel of John in its scope. It is more than that. It contains all the great facts of His Person, His Glory, and His Work. Here we have His Deity; He came forth from the Father: His incarnation; He came into the world: His life on earth; His leaving the world supposes His sacrificial death and His resurrection: His going back to the Father; His ascension and glorification.

This wonderful statement made a deep impression upon the disciples and seems to have clarified their vision. They acknowledged the plainness of His speech, that it was no longer in a figurative way He spoke. They had a vision of His Deity; they realized afresh that He knew all things; they expressed their faith that He came forth from God. And the Lord answered them by a word of warning. "Do ye now believe?" Is it so in reality? He knew their faith would soon be severely tested. As the disciples had said "Thou knowest all things," even so He knew what would happen. A few hours more and they would be scattered; Peter would deny Him and all would leave Him alone. Then He added His own precious assurance. "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." But how can this be reconciled with the fact that He hung on the cross, and, when that dread darkness enshrouded Him, uttered that unfathomable word, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" There is no difficulty. Some speak carelessly of Him as being forsaken by the *Father* on the cross; but He was never forsaken by the Father. The Father never forsook Him; the Father never left Him alone. He was forsaken of *God*.

And blessed are His words of comfort and cheer, not alone for those who heard Him, but for all His own. "These things have I spoken to you, that in Me ye might have peace." Peace, true peace, lasting peace is only found in Him. He announces tribulation for His own in the world. "But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

CHAPTER XVII

We reach the most precious portion of our Gospel. The chapter which is now before us has rightly been called the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the Gospel. It is the Holy of Holies, for we behold here our great High Priest in the presence of the Father, and we hear Him utter His great prayer of intercession. It is the true Lord's prayer. The so-called Lord's prayer, the "Our Father," was given to His disciples in answer to their request, but He never prayed that prayer Himself. He spent nights in prayer on mountain tops, in desert places, but we do not know what He prayed, for it has not pleased the Holy Spirit to give us a record of these prayer nights. Here we have the words of the prayer which He prayed. It has depths which the finite mind cannot fathom. No saint can comprehend the full meaning of this great prayer. No complete exposition or interpretation can ever be given. Three of the Puritan preachers have expounded this chapter. Manton's sermons on it make a volume of 400 folio pages; George Newton's exposition is contained in nearly 600 folio pages and Burgess's sermons on this chapter comprise 700 large pages. But not one of these great preachers claimed to have given a complete exegesis or exhaustive treatment. If all the Puritan preachers and all the other men of God in all ages were to combine, they would not be able to exhaust the riches of the seventeenth chapter of John.

We approach it, therefore, with the deepest reverence, for we are on holy ground. Let us remember that eleven men listened to Him praying. As they heard these blessed words, as they came from His lips, they learned afresh how He loved them, how He cared for them, what He had done for them, what He would do for them, and they heard also of their glorious future. Through these words of prayer they had a deep glimpse of His loving heart. And as we begin to meditate on His words we still hear Him pray, and as we listen to His voice we too shall learn more and more of his mighty love, the love which passeth knowledge.*

Verses 1-3. There is no need of speculating about the locality where this took place. Some think it was in the same place where He had given His farewell words; others think it must have been out in the open, and they surmise it may have been before He passed over Kedron to enter the garden. The text shows nothing as to the exact place. He had finished speaking all these words, recorded in the preceding chapters, and now He lifted up His eyes to heaven. From there He had come, a little while longer and He would go back to heaven. Between the present solemn moment when He addressed the Father, and His physical return to heaven to take His place at the right hand of God, lies the cross, His sacrificial death, His burial and His resurrection. Many times before had He lifted up His eyes to heaven. He did so when He broke the five loaves to feed the thousands who had gathered. He looked to heaven when He healed the deaf and dumb. When He stood before the tomb of Lazarus about to raise him from the dead, He also lifted up His eyes to heaven. And how many more times He must have looked up! Then the first word came from His lips. He said, "Father, the hour is come." Five more times our Lord uses the word Father in His prayer (verses 5, 11, 21, 24 and 25). He is the Son of God and as such addressed God as Father. And all who believe on Him, and are therefore born again, born into the family of God, also lift up their eyes to heaven and say with Him, Father. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God" (i:12, 13). And because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father (Gal. iv:6). For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Eph. ii:18).

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*We do not care to say much about the views of the modernists. Their wicked infidelity becomes very evident when they claim that the Lord never uttered these words, and when they deny the Johanine authorship. They say that some unknown Greek writer, aided by the Pauline theology composed this prayer. This invention is as puerile as it is vicious.

The first thing He tells the Father is that the hour is come. What hour is it? Several times before He had spoken of that hour, that it was not yet come (chapter vii:30 and viii:20). It is the hour which had been fixed by the triune God before the foundation of the world; the hour which in the eternal counsels had been marked out for the sacrificial work and death of the Son of God, the appointed Lamb of God. For four thousand years the Spirit of God in the Word announced that hour. Beginning with the third chapter of Genesis where the fall of man is recorded, that hour becomes the subject of divine revelation. In type, history and prophecies it is constantly pointed out, the hour in which He should make "His soul an offering for sin." For the sake of that hour He had left the bosom of the Father, for that hour He had taken on in the Virgin birth the human body. It was the great end purpose of the incarnation.

Then follows His first petition. "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." We notice first another striking evidence of the Deity of our Lord. Only one who is equal with God, who is God, could ever utter such words. They would be blasphemy in the lips of a mere creature. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has glorified the Father every moment during His life on earth and now He asks to be glorified, so that He might glorify the Father in being glorified. These words can only be explained in their meaning by what was to take place in the hour before Him, and what would follow that hour, namely, His sacrificial death, His burial, His resurrection and His exaltation to the right hand of God. This glory He asked of the Father. And as a result of being thus glorified as the Lamb of God, the sin-bearer by His suffering and death, as well as His glorious resurrection and exaltation, the Father would be glorified. The work of God the Son in His suffering and the glory which followed, glorifies every attribute of the Father. It manifests His holiness, His righteousness, His justice, His mercy, His love and His faithfulness, as well as His power. In all the Son of God suffered as the sin-bearer the Father is glorified and in all He received in glory the Father is glorified.

Next the fact is stated by Him that the Father has given Him power, or authority, over all flesh, to bestow eternal life to as many as the Father has given unto Him. All power and authority belongs to the Son of God, and, in the realm of redemption, power is conferred upon Him by the Father. This power extends over all flesh, which denotes the entire human race, Jews and Gentiles. But all flesh is not being saved, but those who believe on Him, are the gift of the Father to the Son, and these constitute the members of His body. Ultra-Calvinists apply the term "all flesh" to the elect only, but that is incorrect. There is implied a redemption in its offer, but not in its results. The whole is given to Him, but only that He may impart eternal life to the chosen. Who are thus chosen is indicated in chapter vi:40, namely, "every one that seeth the Son and has faith in Him." The gift He bestows upon those is eternal life, as we read in Romans vi:26, "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." What this eternal life is we have expounded before. But we read, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee as the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Eternal life is something received, the impartation of a new nature, the divine nature. It is therefore a present possession and carries with it the positive and blessed knowledge of the only true God, and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent into the world. Such knowledge is out of the reach of the natural man. Such a one may have a head knowledge about God and Christ, but what is meant here is the true knowledge of God, and our Lord, and which is manifested in a life of righteousness, a walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son.

Critics have made much of it that the third person is used, as well as the fact that our Lord speaks of Himself as Jesus Christ. It is true such a declaration is not found elsewhere in the Gospels, but this is not an evidence that a later writer composed this prayer, as the rationalists claim. The time had come for Him to declare His Messiahship and He did so in His prayer, and called Himself Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, in the Father's presence and within the hearing of His disciples.

Verses 4-5. We cannot be in doubt what the first part of the fourth verse means. It refers to His holy life on earth, in which He constantly glorified the Father. But what does it mean "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do"? We have, in teaching on this chapter, always stated it means the finished work on the Cross. But some have a difficulty. If He meant the finished work, His death, how could He speak thus, when that work was still unfinished? We must remember that elsewhere in this prayer He speaks of being "no longer in the world" yet He was still here. In anticipation He looks onward beyond the cross. He knew His work could never fail, that it would be finished,and therefore He gives expression to it in the presence of the Father and for the comfort of His own. Augustinus states this in an excellent way: "Christ saith He *has* finished, that which He most surely knows He *will* finish. Thus long before in prophecy He used verbs of past tense, when that which He said was to come to pass after many years. 'They pierced my hands and feet' He says, not they *will* pierce."

The fifth verse introduces us to one of the most striking utterances of our Lord, which demonstrates His Deity. If there were in the whole Bible no other statement revealing the Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ but only this fifth verse in this chapter, His Deity would be forever established. The self witness of our Lord as spoken to the Father tells us two things: He was with the Father before the world ever existed and He possessed glory with the Father. That outward glory, the very glory of God, for He is God, He had left behind when He came down to earth to be born in Bethlehem. Going back to Him who sent Him, He clothed Himself with that eternal Glory of Godhead. In what that glory consists we do not know, for it is unrevealed and passes our comprehension.

Verses 6-8. After having told the Father about Himself, the work He finished, and after requesting His glory, He speaks of those who belong to Him. Before Him, listening to His petitions, were eleven men. What He says concerned them. But all believers are included as well. Verse 20 makes this clear.

The first thing He mentions in speaking about those who belong to Him, because they believed on Him as the Son of God, is, the manifestation of the name of God. Jews revered the name of Jehovah. Even at the present time strictly orthodox Jews are afraid to pronounce the name "Jehovah" and substitute in its place the name "Adonai." And now the Lord says, "I have manifested Thy name." The word manifest means literally "to cause to shine forth." The name that was enshrouded in darkness, in thick darkness (Exod. xx:21), the name of Him who dwells in an unapproachable light, which no man can find out by searching, is caused to shine forth through the Son. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath manifested Him" (i:18).

But what name of God has He made known? The name, **Father.** David and the other inspired writers of the Psalms, like Asaph and the children of Korah, employed different names of God. Not once did they use the word "Father" in their prayers and hymns of praise. No prophet, priest or king of the Old Testament dispensation ever addressed God as Father. It is true nationally Israel was God's firstborn son, and therefore God was the Father of the nation (see Isa. lxiii:18 and lxiv:8), but the individual knowledge of God as Father, and the Fatherhood of God, His character and His attributes, could only be made known by the Son. All through the preceding discourse He had manifested to them what His Father is and as He knew Him. He did not speak about the Father to the unbelieving Jews, but only to His own. Well may we remember in these days of an obnoxious Modernism, that the knowledge of God as Father is only possible in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ, the Virgin-born Son of God, who died for our sins, there is no Fatherhood and Father-knowledge of God. It was after His death, resurrection and ascension that the full realization of all this was bestowed upon believers in the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of Sonship, by Him we cry, Abba, Father.

"Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy Word." Believers are given, or entrusted (the meaning of the Greek verb) by the Father to the Son;

and now the Son tells the Father that they were His in the beginning. Some have applied this to Israel, the chosen people, but this is incorrect. It means all believers. All believers are given by the Father, predestined and chosen; their very number and names were known before the foundation of the world. This is a wonderful fact which our finite minds cannot comprehend, but which we reverently believe. All true believers who believe and repent, who have received the Spirit, may fairly take comfort in the thought, that they were known and cared for and given to Christ by an eternal covenant, long before they knew Christ or cared for Him. It is an unspeakable comfort to remember that Christ cares for that which the Father has given Him. The fact that His own keep His Word, give attention to it and believe it, is the evidence that they belong to Him and are born again.

He speaks of their knowledge. They had realized that His words and His works were of the Father. While the enemies attributed His mighty works to satanic agencies and charged Him with blaspheming when He spoke of His Father and His union with Him, while others, like Nicodemus, were convinced that God was with Him, His own knew that all He said and all He did was of the Father. From Him they had received the Father's words, believed them, and they knew that He had come from the Father.

Verses 9-12. With the ninth verse the specifically intercessory part of His great prayer begins. He makes requests for those given to Him by the Father, and as we shall see, He prays for their sanctification, their union, their preservation and their glorification. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me." These words have been interpreted in different ways. Some teach that our Lord, when He said, "I pray not for the world," meant that He did not pray at that particular time for the world, and that He certainly makes in heaven intercession for the wicked. Others say He is only praying for the elect and all others are excluded and have no share in His prayers. It is the question as to the character of His prayer. In His mediatorial work He is the mediator between God and man, and this certainly includes the unsaved world.

But the prayer before us is the prayer of priestly intercession and that concerns only His people. The high priest in the Old Testament is the type of Him who is our great High Priest. Aaron carried upon His bosom the breastplate of twelve stones and upon his shoulders two stones. In the breastplate and the shoulder stones the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraven. He presented the people of God in the presence of the Lord and not the Jebusites, the Amorites or the Hittites. The Epistle to the Hebrews makes it plain that our High Priest appears in the presence of God only for those who believe on Him. Those who do not believe on Him, who reject Him, have no share and part in His priestly intercession. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth and maketh intercession for them" (Heb. vii:25). His priestly intercession in glory is occupied with His own. He prays for those given to Him by the Father, and who are the members of His body. The day is coming when that body is complete, when the last one given to Him by the Father is added to it; then that body will be taken to glory, in answer to the last petition in this prayer (verse 24). When the redeemed are brought to the Father's house, those who died in the Lord, raised in incorruption, and those who live when His shout is heard, changed in a moment, then His prayer for His own ends. They need it no longer. Another request will He then make of the Father. He will pray for the world at that time. There is an unprayed prayer, which our Lord has not yet uttered. In the second Psalm God addresses His Son: "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." That prayer will be answered and at His second coming He will receive His blood bought inheritance and claim the uttermost parts of the earth.

"And all mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them." This is a parenthetical statement and brings out once more the same truth so prominent in this Gospel, the unity which exists between the Father and the Son. What Luther said on this verse is true, "Any man may say, What is mine is thine, but only the Son can say, What is Thine is Mine." His equality with the Father is testified to by Himself. All the Father is and has, He, the Son is and has. "Thine are Mine" means, therefore, Thy nature, Thy Name, Thine eternity, Thy holiness, Thy perfection, Thy fulness, Thy glory, Thine attributes, Thy throne, Thy people, and everything else. Previously He had witnessed the same when He said, "All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and show it unto you" (xvi:15). Inasmuch as believers belong to the Father, are His gift to the Son, our Lord in this statement includes them. Those who have believed on Me are Thine, O Father; they are Mine likewise. They are ours mutually, equally and eternally. What marvels of Divine Love and Grace we are facing in this unsearchable statement of our Lord! Therefore because we are owned, possessed by the Father and the Son, our temporal and spiritual interests are their interests. We are the objects of the Father's and the Son's love and care. Here our faith rests. Then we look onward to eternity and realize in the light of these words spoken by our Lord what glory awaits us in that everlasting fellowship with the Father and the Son.

And He is glorified in them, that is, in His people. Believers are the blessed and ever precious fruit of His own work; we are His workmanship. Our salvation and all that goes with it is His glory. His power, His faithfulness, His never-failing grace, all His loving-kindness and condescension, as well as everything else He is, is glorified, manifested in His people. There the Church, to which all true believers belong, is called His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. It is His glory.

"I am glorified in them." We feel as if we could dwell on this sentence, and never weary of the wonderful theme it presents to us. It is a precious prism, every aspect of it sheds forth divine radiancy. Angelic might cannot display Christ's strength so much as our weakness does, the riches of heaven cannot display Christ's fulness so much as our poverty does; the holiness of the archangel cannot speak His praise so much as the covering of our righteousness does; the anthems of the seraphim cannot utter His glory as do the praises of the redeemed; and not all the worship of heaven's hosts can render to Him so grateful an offering, or crown Him with so rich a crown, as the love of His pardoned people. "I am glorified in them."*

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee." That is, these words are an evidence that our Lord speaks of Himself, as having finished the work on the cross, risen and ascended to heaven. He was soon to be no more in the world and in anticipation He speaks of it as already accomplished. But while He went back to the Father, His own are still in the world. This fact that "these are in the world" is now in His intercessory prayer the chief burden. He speaks of them as being in the world, not of the world, hated by the world, and to be in the world, as He, the sent One of God, was in the world. His first petition is for their preservation. This is the only time we hear our Lord addressing His Father as "Holy Father." The reason why here only He mentions His Father as the holy Father is not difficult to discover. His own were left in an unholy world, surrounded by evil on all sides. As belonging to the Father and the Son they were called to holiness. He commits them, therefore, to the care and keeping of the Father, He who is holy and who is able to keep them free from the dominion of evil and able to make them sharers of His holiness (1 Peter i:14-17). He prays that the Father may keep them in the power of that name, which He had manifested to them. That keeping means everything. Keeping from falling away, from evil doctrines, from being overcome by sorrow, or in tribulation and suffering, keeping them in life and in death. From this first petition of our Lord's prayer we learn the absolute security of a true believer. If a true believer, one who belongs to Christ, who has been given by the Father to the Son, for whom the Son of God intercedes, can be lost, it would mean the loss of Christ's glory, the loss of a part of the travail of His soul. It would mean the helplessness of God in that He could not accomplish what He destined before the foundation of the world, and that the world, the flesh and the devil have greater power than God has. It would mean that Christ died in vain, and as a result of the loss of true believers, demons could forever sneer and mock. But the impossibility of this was taught before by our Lord (chap. x). Here He puts those given to Him by the Father into the Father's hand and keeping.

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*Rainsford.

The second petition "that they may be one, as we are," we shall examine more fully in connection with verse 21.

He tells next to the Father that while He was with them, His disciples, He kept them. "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled." And that one was Judas Iscariot, concerning whom the Lord said that it would have been better if he had never been born. Judas never had believed on Jesus as the Son of God. He did not own Him as Messiah and Lord. He addressed Him as Rabbi, and as we pointed out before, when the other apostle by name of Judas addressed Jesus by the divine name Lord, the Holy Spirit makes it clear, it was not Judas Iscariot who confessed Him thus (chaps. xiv:22). The Scriptures had foretold his case (Psalm lxix:25, cix:8), it was foreseen that he loved cursing and did not delight in blessing, that he would be a thief, and the Lord knew that he had a demon and would betray Him. Arminian theologians delight to quote Judas as an example that a believer can fall from grace, but he did not, for he never had it. And what a solemn warning he is! A man may go far in professing discipleship and even enjoy special privileges, and yet be unsaved and on the road to eternal perdition. Churches are full today of unsaved, unregenerated, professing Christians. They are going to be lost, for they never were saved; church membership, ordinances and religiousness of an outward form does not save. Many have asked the question why was it ordered that there should be a Judas among the twelve? We give a good answer from another. "It may be this: our Lord, when He came to this world, came to be tried, He came to taste the sorrows and the difficulties of His people, so that He might know them all. There is not a greater trial or sorrow for a tender heart than unkindness and ingratitude. Here was one bound up with Him in the family circle, the constant companion of Christ, admitted to the closest fellowship, and yet a traitor to Him in heart, watching Him with malice, and betraying Him for thirty pieces of silver. I believe it was one of the bitterest of sorrows which He tasted here. Or it may be this: here was a traitor in the camp, a spy upon Christ, and if he had discovered a fault in thought, or word, or deed, he would have been ready to tell it, ready to expose and exaggerate it, but it is something glorious to hear this enemy forced to confess, 'I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood.' "

Verses 13-16. All these words addressed by our Lord to His Father were spoken audibly in the presence of His disciples. They heard every word which fell from His lips. This is the meaning of the phrase, "These things I speak in the world." The purpose was that His joy might be fulfilled in them. The joy of which He speaks is **His** joy, which is His to bestow, of which He is the author and the giver, and of which He Himself is the object. It is His own personal joy which He imparts to those who have trusted in Him and walk in His fellowship. When the disciples listened to His prayer they knew nothing of that joy. It became their abiding portion after the Holy Spirit, the other paraclete, had come upon them. Then they entered into His joy and realized all it meant. This joy is ours, too, and belongs to all the children of God. It is the joy of salvation, the joy which comes in believing, which is the result of trusting in Him and accepting the bounties of His grace. Thus we rejoice in the knowledge that our sins are forgiven, that we are reconciled, that God is our Father, the Son of God our Loving Lord and Friend, the Holy Spirit our indwelling guest, and that the Father's house is our blessed and eternal home, where we shall meet Him, to be forever with the Lord. And we rejoice in Him. The fulness of joy is He Himself. Rejoice in the Lord is the repeated exhortation of the Spirit of God. "In whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

With verse 14 our Lord prays concerning His own as present in the world, though no longer of it, but called to be His representatives down here. He speaks of having given to them His word. The Father had sent Him, the

Word; He is the expression of the Father's mind.* He had entrusted to them the Father's Word for the purpose that they should in the world reveal and manifest that Word. Such is the calling of a true believer in Christ. And the world, of which John in his epistle bears witness as lying in the wicked one, hated them. The world can do nothing but hate that which the Father has given, for this world is controlled and governed by its god, which is Satan, the prince of this world. But there is another reason why the world hates those who are Christ's. The Lord states it in that profound declaration "Because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." This is stated once more by Him in verse 16. It is a great declaration of tremendous meaning, but alas! how little it is understood and how little is the great truth it contains manifested in the lives and in the conduct of God's children.

Our Lord was not of the world. In Him was no evil, no sin; He had no fallen nature. The prince of this world came and found nothing in Him. Because He was not of the world, not indwelt by the principles which govern the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of eyes and the pride of life, He lived that holy life in which He glorified God. We are by nature of this world. We have a fallen nature because we are conceived and born in sin. We are enemies by wicked works and linked with the author of sin. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ speaks here of His own as being not of the world, even as He is not of the world. His disciples as well as we and all other true believers are by nature all which we state above. But when we believe on Him we are born again. In the new birth we receive the divine nature, and of that new nature, the nature imparted by the Spirit of God, it is written, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John iii:9). The Son of God, our Lord could not sin; and the new nature, the divine nature, received in the birth from above, cannot sin. When we sin as believers, it is our old nature. In this blessed sense, then, are believers no longer of the world, even as He is not of the world. He has taken those who believe on Him out of the world, by separating them from the world and unto Himself, and giving them the divine nature.

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*In verse 8 a different word is used than in verse 14, where the word employed is "Logos," the same as used in the first chapter of this Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word"—Logos.

Because believers are not of the world, even as He is not of the world, they have the capacity to walk even as He walked (1 John ii:6) and be His representatives. If believers live according to His calling, separated from the world, they will be hated by the world. But if the believer is conformed to this world, loves the things of the world, lives a worldly life (as so many professing Christians do), they know nothing of that hatred. The separated life stirs up the world, and especially the "religious world" and hatred follows, for the faith and the corresponding life of separation condemns the world. If we were more consistent in our lives, more outspoken, more faithful in our daily witness, more separated from the ways and methods of this evil age, we would also find out that it is still true that the world hates us. But, on the other hand, believers must guard against courting the world's hatred by discourtesy or by erratic ways and manners. How soon a believer may forget this weighty saying of our Lord, "not of the world, even as I am not of this world!" It can be realized only as we keep our hearts and minds fixed upon Him in yonder glory and our heavenly calling in Him. As a result the Holy Spirit will lead us into an unsparing self-judgment as to our ways.

"That the world improves for Christ or His own is as false as that the flesh can ameliorate. Such a belief is light become darkness and how great is that darkness! There may not be the reflex of the latter part of the first chapter in Romans, but it answers to the beginning of 2 Tim. iii. It is the natural man knowing enough to forego what is shameless, and to invest all with a religious veil; it is the world essentially occupying itself with the things of God in profession, but in reality of the world, where common sense suffices for its service and its worship, and the mind of Christ would be altogether unapplicable. What a triumph for the enemy! It is just what we see in Christendom; and nothing irritates so much as the refusal so to walk, worship, or serve. It does not matter how loudly you denounce or protest; if you join the world, they will not mind your words, and then you are faithless to Christ. Nor does it matter how much grace and patience you show; if you keep apart as not of the world, you incur enmity, hatred and contempt. To act as not of the world is felt to be its strongest condemnation; and no meekness or love can make it palatable. Nor does God intend that it should, for He means it as part of the testimony of His Son. And as the world neither receives nor understands the Father's word, so it hates those who have that word and act upon it."*

His prayer for His own is not that they should be taken out of the world, but that the Father should keep them from evil. This does not clash with the great revelation the Lord gave later to the Apostle Paul. The time will come when the Lord in glory will ask the Father for the taking out from the world of all who belong to Him. In fact He requests this later in His prayer (verse 24). When that prayer is answered He will "descend out of heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God." Then the righteous dead will be raised from among the dead, the living believers changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye and caught up together with them in clouds to meet Him in the air. Then all are taken out of the world. But the time for that was not yet when He spoke these words of prayer, nor is the time now. His own are to remain in the world for a very definite purpose. Many a believer, if not all, would love to leave this dark world with its conflicts and troubles behind at once to be with Him forever. If the Lord would take all true believers at once out of the world, it would be disastrous to the believers, as well as to the world. Believers need the conflict, the trials, the bitter experiences in the world for their own good. Well has it been said "Believers would never value Christ and heaven as much as they will do one day, if they had not been kept here on earth, taught to know their own hearts, and be made like Him, perfected through suffering." It would be equally disastrous to the world itself if all true believers were at once taken out of it. The world would be deprived of the testimony and the light which believers are called to give and be. Supposing all these eleven men had been taken with Christ to glory, when He left the earth, how could the world have received a testimony apart from them and believe? He still leaves us here for the double purpose, for our own good, and for the good of the world. When the hour comes, scheduled before the creation of the world, when His body shall be joined to Him, every true believer will be taken out of the world. Here also is a refutal of asceticism. Men and women still shut themselves up in cells to be separated from the world, to flee from it. But this cowardly desertion of the world, as practiced in Romish monasteries, is not Christianity. It is a pagan institution. Buddhism and other Oriental religions have their monasteries, and practice the same asceticism as Rome.

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*William Kelly.

Instead of asking that they might be taken out of the world, He prayed "that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Does this mean evil in the general sense of the word, or does it mean "the evil one," that is Satan? The Greek may mean both, evil and the evil personified in Satan. We think the evil one is meant. It has this meaning in Matthew xiii:25, 38 and 39. John in His first epistle uses the same expression and there it always means the evil one. See 1 John ii:13, 14; iii:12; v:18. What we call evil, trials, losses, bereavements, temptations, persecutions, slanders, etc., are the things which all must work together for our good. It is inconceivable that our Lord should have prayed that His own might be kept from this. The devil is a roaring lion seeking to devour the children of God and Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. His aim is to destroy or to corrupt those who belong to Christ and snatch them out of His hands. Hence our Lord prays the Father that they may be kept from the evil one. And when he comes to ask for them, as he asked for Job's testing and for Peter, the intercession of Christ in the behalf of His beloved ones keeps them from being overcome. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," He said to Peter before Satan ever appeared to sift him as wheat.

Then once more He tells the Father of the position of His disciples. "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." As He overcame and Satan's power could not harm Him, so His own, no longer in the domain of the power of darkness, but belonging to Him, will be kept.

Verses 17-19. To the most precious things already mentioned by the praying Lord He adds now the petition for the sanctification of His disciples. "Sanctify them by Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth." Many expositors have greatly misunderstood the meaning of this simple request. They speak of it as if the Lord requested their setting apart for ministry. We quote from one of these expositors: "The original may mean either 'consecrate' or 'sanctify.' It means both to set apart from a common to a sacred use, and also to make holy for that use; in other words, it may mean to make holy in mission and in character. The former is evidently the meaning here; Christ prays that the Father will set apart His disciples to a life of divine service as priests unto God." But this view is incorrect. The petition for their santification must be connected with the preceding verse, which we quote once more, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." As we have pointed out before, believers in Christ as the Son of God, as these disciples were believers, have received the new nature, the divine nature, and inasmuch as it is a holy nature they are constituted in Christ Saints, they are sanctified. The petition which follows for their sanctification by the Truth of the Father concerns the believer's practical sanctification, how they are to live as not of the world in a life of separation. This is accomplished in the first place by the Father's Word, that word which is Truth, while He whom the Father sent and through whom His Word is given, is the Truth. As the believer walks in the truth, the truth made known by the Father through the Son, he is increasingly sanctified and enabled to walk even as He walked. It reminds us of chapter viii:32: "And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free." In his expository thoughts on the Gospel of John, the late Bishop Ryle makes some excellent remarks on sanctification which will be helpful to all. He gathers four great principles from this petition of our Lord.

"(1) The importance of sanctification and practical godliness. Our Lord specially asks it for His people. Those that despise Christian life and character, and think it of no importance so long as they are sound in *doctrine*, know very little of the mind of Christ. Our Christianity is worth nothing, if it does not make us value and seek practical sanctification.

"(2) The wide difference between justification and sanctification. Justification is a perfect and complete work obtained for us by Christ, imputed to us, and external to us, as perfect and complete the moment we believe, as it can ever be, and admitting of no degrees. Sanctification is an inward work wrought in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and never quite perfect so long as we live in this body of sin. The disciples needed no prayer for justification; they were completely justified already. They did need prayer for their sanctification; for they were not completely sanctified.

"(3) Sanctification is a thing that admits of growth; else why should our Lord pray, 'Sanctify them'? The doctrine of imputed sanctification is one that I can find nowhere in the Word of God. Christ's imputed righteousness I see clearly, but not an imputed holiness. Holiness is a thing imparted and inwrought, but not imputed.

"(4) The Word is the great instrument by which the Holy Spirit carried forward the work of inward sanctification. By bringing that Word to bear more forcibly on mind and will, and conscience, and affection, we make the character grow more holy. Sanctification from without by bodily austerities and asceticism, and a round of forms, ceremonies, and outward means, is a delusion. True sanctification begins from within. Here lies the immense importance of regularly reading the written Word, and hearing the preached Word. It surely, though insensibly, promotes our sanctification. Believers who neglect the Word will not grow in holiness and victory over sin."

The next sentence is closely linked with the petition for the sanctification of His people, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." While believers are not of the world even as He is not of the world, they are in the world as His representatives, sent into the world, as the Father had sent Him. What a high and holy calling this is! Well may we cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things"! While this applied first of all to the disciples who surrounded Him then, whom He sent forth as His messengers, it equally applies to us. We are His sent ones. As such we must be holy, separated from evil. As His representatives and witnesses we need to be spotless and blameless, and for this He prayed when He said, "Sanctify them."

Another important statement follows: "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth." Here is the second means for the sanctification of believers. They are not only practically sanctified by the Word, His Truth, but He Himself for their sakes has sanctified Himself, that by this sanctification they also might be sanctified through the Truth. Most expositors apply these words of our Lord to His sacrificial death on the cross. They claim that it was then He sanctified Himself for us, that is, in the offering of His body. It is true that the believer is set apart, the meaning of the word sanctified, by the death of Christ, for we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (Heb. x:10), but this is not the real meaning of the words spoken by our Lord. If His sanctification meant the work of the cross it should have preceded the prayer-petition, sanctify them by Thy Truth, for all practical sanctification is the result of His work for us on the cross.

But our Lord sanctified Himself in another way. He set Himself apart to God after His passion; He went to heaven, receiving glory at the right hand of God, and is now in His risen and glorified humanity the image of God (see 2 Cor. iv:4). In that glory light in which He has set Himself apart for our sakes He is the pattern of His own redeemed ones. What He is they all shall be in that glorious day when He will be manifested, when all His own will see Him as He is and will be like Him. He is the Firstborn among many brethren, and ultimately all His own, whom He is not ashamed to call brethren, will be conformed into the same image of Himself in resurrection glory. The contemplation of this wonderful truth, the highest and the best, leads to our own sanctification. As we behold His glory as in a glass we are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

It is the contemplation of, and the heart occupation with Christ glorified and we in Him, which detaches the believer from the world and leads Him in the path of separation. For this He prayed. First, that the Father's word He had communicated to His own might sanctify us, and that His own place in glory at the right hand of the Father might accomplish our sanctification also.

Verses 20-21. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." We hear from His own blessed lips that all believers are included in this gracious intercession. If this word had not been spoken one might think that He prayed only for His disciples, but His words tell us that all His Saints at all times are included. They all need preservation, sanctification, and His ministry as priest and advocate. He prayed for all coming believers, for generations upon generations, including ourselves, whom He knew would be given to Him by the Father.

His petition is for their unity. In verse 11 He had prayed also "that they may be one as we are." In that verse it concerned the Apostles. It was accomplished in them by the power of the Holy Spirit. Here is another and larger unity, for all who believe on Him, which means again all future believers, are to be one. Unbelievers have frequently ridiculed this request of our Lord as they pointed to the many denominations, the different creeds, ceremonials, and the confusion which exists in professing Christendom, and then claimed that Christ's own prayer has never been and never will be answered. But our Lord did not pray for an outward unity expressed in an imposing organization. The true Church, the body of Christ, is not an organization but an organism, with the Head in glory and members put into this mystical, invisible body by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The unity is a unity in the Father and in the Son, "that they also may be one in us." It is that fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ of which John writes in his first epistle (1 John i:2). It is fellowship in virtue of the Father made known in the Son, and of the Son the object of the Father's love and delight, into which all true believers are brought by the Holy Spirit. As we delight ourselves in the Son we are one with the Father, for He is His delight; as we know God as our Father and the Father's love, we are one with the Son. This is the unity of which our Lord speaks here. Into this spiritual unity, Jew, Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free are brought in Christ. The Jew hated the Gentile and the Gentile hated the Jew; one was bitterly opposed to the other, hating and being hated. But now this unity, this blessed oneness! Jew and Gentile in Christ, the middle wall of partition broken down, both having access by one Spirit unto the Father!

And this unity needs to be manifested in a practical way, that is in love for the brethren, for all the Saints. In this is the call for the world to believe that the Father sent the Son. Not through the law but by the coming of the Son of God these blessed results have been brought about. Whenever believers walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son and in fellowship one with another, loving each other with a pure heart fervently, they bear a witness to the world that the Father sent the Son, for it is the work of Christ which has accomplished this. Alas! that the world in our own day should have so very little of this witness!

Verses 22-26. He had prayed for the preservation and the sanctification of His own, and now He prays for their glorification. It is a wonderful legacy which the Lord of glory bestows upon His people and with which He introduces the final section of His prayer, "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them." Commentators have fairly wrestled with the question, what did our Lord mean with these words? What glory is it He promises to give? We mention a few of the different opinions.

Augustinus and others with him thought it is immortality and glory which those received who have served Him faithfully. Calvin stated that it is the restoration of the image and likeness of God. Bengel, the author of the Gnomen, declared that the glory means that insensible power, influence and authority, which accompanied all our Lord did and said during his earthly ministry. Zwingli, Brentius and others taught that the glory is the power of working miracles, while two other well known exegetes, Stier and Hengstenberg held that the glory is unity of mind and heart. Even so good an expositor as Bishop Ryle says, "the question will probably never be settled."

There is no difficulty whatever connected with this saying of our Lord. Like the other statements "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do," "I am no longer in the world," the gift of His glory was spoken in anticipation of His resurrection. In resurrection the Father rewarded Him for His faithful work. This is the demand of the righteousness of God. His ever blessed Son came to earth, glorified Him in His holy life, and finally glorified Him in His death on the cross, in which He vindicated the holy character of God and satisfied His righteousness in behalf of lost sinners. This demanded a reward. The reward is that God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. It is the truth stated elsewhere, as in Phil. ii, "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name." This acquired glory it is which He gives to His own. It is a most refreshing and wonderful truth. The Son of God came to die for our sins and when He died as our substitute He took upon Himself all which we deserved as guilty sinners—Jesus paid it all. Then God, because He did this work, righteously rewarded Him, because He and He alone deserves a reward. This reward consists in glory. Then our loving Lord gives the glory He deserves and He received to all those who belong to Him. He makes His own sharers of His acquired glory.

It is not difficult to find the acquired glory of our Lord in the New Testament. It is sevenfold. We mention them briefly and show how the believer participates in these acquired glories. (1) He received in resurrection the glory of sonship, inasmuch as He is the First begotten from among the dead. We share this sonship with Him and are sons of God in Him. (2) Then God made Him the heir of all things (Heb. i:2). The International Bible Student Association, also known as Russellites, sometimes give this fact as an evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ was a created Being and not very God, that He received divinity after His death. Such an argument shows the ignorance of these people. Christ is God and all the glory of God is His glory. But to make redeemed humanity, redeemed through His own precious blood, sharers of all things, God made Him heir of all things as the head of the new creation. And we are heirs of God and fellow-heirs of Christ. (3) God gave Him a glorious place for a reward. He seated Him at His own right hand. The man in Glory is as near to God and as dear to God as any Being can be. He holds a place higher than the angels. In Him we are seated in the heavenly places of Christ Jesus. (4) He received as His reward a glorious name, "the name which is above every other name." And it is written "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it," the promise to the overcomer (Revelation ii:17). "And I will write upon him My new name" (Rev. iii:12). "And they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. xxii:4). (5) He received the glory of Priesthood, being constituted a priest after the order of Melchisedec. And we are priests with Him. (6) He is made King of kings and God will give Him the promised kingdom. The throne over all the earth is His and the nations will yet be His inheritance. His own are to reign and rule with Him. (7) Finally He received the glory of Judgeship. All judgment is committed to Him. This also His own will share with Him, for it is written "Do ye not know that the Saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi:1, 3).

Such are His acquired glories and our participation in them. The consummation of all is not now but in that coming day of glory, "when He is manifested we shall be manifested with Him in glory." It is the day in which He will come "in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke ix:26). His own will be with Him in that glory; they shine in His glory. Therefore in that day He will receive the request of His lips and the desire of His heart (Psl. xxi:2). Then He will receive the travail of His soul and be satisfied when "He cometh to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believed" (2 Thess. i:10). Thus shall we be perfected in one, and the world will then not be called upon to believe that the Father sent His Son, but the world will *know*. Faith will be changed into sight. There will be a glorious public display, when the Son brings many sons in His glory. In that day the whole world will know and all the present day infidelity will be forever banished. It will be the answer of God to all the inventions of modern rationalism as upheld by the liberal teachers in Christendom. It will be the answer of God to silence the delusion cults. It will be the means of the conversion of the remnant of Israel.

Then follows that blessed and gracious petition, which to the full still remains unanswered. "Father I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." It is His Prayer for the glorification of His people. In praying He uses a word which He used nowhere else, the word "I will." The original verb (*Delo*) has a meaning of a positive purpose. It is therefore more than a mere request, it is a demand. He had promised them "I will come again and receive unto myself that where I am ye may be also (xiv:3)" and now He tells the Father what He wills in behalf of His own, because His will was in perfect harmony with the Father's will. Here is the blessed hope for those who belong to Him. It is not the visible manifestation, but the home-bringing of those who are His. How this will take place is revealed in that great revelation given to the Apostle Paul by the Word of the Lord and recorded in 1 Thess. iv: 16-18. It awaits its glorious fulfillment. The same Lord who promised "I will come again," the same Lord who prayed "Father, I will," the same Lord who is our intercessor in the presence of the Father, will descend out of heaven with a shout. The great transformation will take place. The sleeping saints (as to their bodies) whose spirits are in a disembodied state in His presence, will receive their resurrection bodies, and we shall be changed to be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then shall we be with Him where He is and share His glory as well as behold His own glory, which here is the glory which is proper to Himself, as the object of the Father's love, a love which goes beyond the time of the world's foundation. What will it be when it shall be done! What glory is our happy and eternal portion!

Then He tells the Father of the contrast between the world and His own. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me."

Before He had addressed the Father as "Holy Father," but here He speaks of Him as "Righteous Father." That righteous Father the world did not know, and all along His gracious ministry the world refused to know Him. But He, the Son, has known Him, though He walked in the garb of a servant, having humbled Himself, yet all along He knew the Father, even as He had said before, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. xi:27). Then He spoke of His disciples, "these have known that Thou hast sent Me," and in this knowledge that the Father sent the Son, they know and have the Father also. It was His comfort that while the world knew Him not, His disciples knew Him and were in the fellowship with Him and the Father.

This great chapter ends with the final word which He prayed. It is another word of comfort and cheer when He tells the Father, "And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." To make the Father's Name known to those whom the Father had given Him had been His ministry to the disciples. Only He who knew the Father could make Him known. But this ministry is not confined to the past, it is a present ministry, for He says, "and will declare it." Therefore, from heaven, He continues to make known to the hearts of those who believe on Him, the Father and the Father's love, so that all may have the consciousness of the same love which rested upon Himself when He was on earth. He Himself is identified with His own; He is in them. And the marvelous thing is that we all can say in faith, "I am loved as He is loved." Our poor doubting hearts object, and the thought comes of our weakness, our imperfections, our sinfulness. May we realize that we are beloved thus not on account of any loveliness which is in us, but because we are in Him, who is altogether lovely. Because we belong to Christ, are in Him and He is in us, because we are one with Him, of His flesh and bones (Ephes. v) we are loved as He is loved. We close our meditations on this most precious and holy portion of the Gospel of John with the words which George Newton, the puritan preacher, put at the close of his exposition of this chapter.

"How earnest and importunate is Christ with God the Father, that we may be one here, and that we may be in one place hereafter! Oh, let us search into the heart of Jesus Christ, laid open to us in this abridgment of His intercession for us, that we may know it and the workings of it more and more, until at length the precious prayer comes to its full effect, and we be taken up to be forever with the Lord, and where He is there we may be also."

CHAPTER XVIII

Verses 1-11. A comparison with the account of the arrest of our Lord as given by the synoptics, with what John records will show marked differences, but certainly not discrepancies. Matthew, Mark and Luke speak of the agony in the garden; Luke only reports the sweat in the garden, like great drops of blood, but John does not write anything of this agony at all. He passes it over, for his pen is guided by the Holy Spirit, to bring out in his Gospel the glory of Christ as the Son of God, therefore describing His sublime Deity; there was no need of mentioning the agony in the garden, or the blood-sweat of the Son of Man. But John mentions things which are omitted by the other evangelists. He alone names the brook Cedron; he tells us of the collapse of the mob which had come to arrest Him, and only John gives the name of the disciple who drew the sword. All these differences are for a purpose and were ordered by the Spirit of God.

The brook Cedron (Kidron) is repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament. It means "the black torrent." When

Absalom started his rebellion against his father, David went weeping across that brook (2 Sam. xv:23). And now He, whom David called His Lord, the root and offspring of David, went across the same brook, to the place where in agony of soul He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears (Hebrews v:7). He is now to drink "of the brook in the way" (Psalm cx:7). His deepest humiliation was at hand, the path which led to the cross and from there to glory. There is a tradition that our Lord followed the way by which the scape goat, the Azazel, was sent on the day of atonement into the wilderness. He crossed the brook and His disciples with Him. We do not know if there was a bridge to cross or if they waded through the swollen winter stream. Perhaps the latter was the case; for the greater part of the year the brook was dry. He was going through the deep waters of death, through which He went as once the ark of God carried by the Levites made a way through the waters of Jordan. The brook forded, they were in the garden, the garden of Gethsemane. Augustine in his comment on Gethsemane said: "It was fitting that the blood of the great physician should there be poured out, where the disease of man first began." It is of course, not true that His blood was poured out in the garden; it was poured out on the cross. But the suggestion is correct. It was in a garden where the fall of man took place, and our Lord's entrance into the garden marks the beginning of his great sacrificial work as the seed of the woman, first announced on the scene of man's fall.

He entered that garden with His disciples. It was a familiar place to Him, for often had He been there before, perhaps in anticipation of the final visit when His hour had come. Judas knew the place and knew that our Lord often passed the nights out of doors. Judas through the influence of the chief priests had with him a detachment of Roman soldiers; then there were the officers, that is the temple police, quite a large company. In spite of the full moon they carried, besides their weapons, lanterns and torches, if necessary to seek the prisoner among the darker recesses of the garden. It was a great multitude, perhaps several hundred men (Matt. xxvi:47). Jews and Gentiles were thus represented in the mob ready to seize upon the Lord of glory and lead Him forward to the death of the cross. Did they expect resistance, or perhaps a demonstration of His power? He knew beforehand all things that should come upon Him. He had a perfect knowledge of all the suffering and shame which awaited Him. He knew it before the foundation of the world. He knew it in time. It was always before Him, even in His tender years. He saw it in Scripture. He knew every blow which was to be dealt Him, the smiting of the cheek, the plucking of the hair, the spitting in the face, the cruel Roman scourging, the crown of thorns, the nailing to the cross, all the shame and the suffering on that cross. There was no need of searching for Him. Majestically, when the mob led by Judas advanced, He stepped ahead of His disciples and said, "Whom seek ye?" His hour was come. If it had not yet come, then not all the treachery in the world, nor Rome's power could have laid hold on Him. And if He had spoken but a word another angel of the Lord would have smitten the great multitude, as once he smote the proud army of Sennacherib.

His question is answered. They seek Jesus of Nazareth. It is evident from what we read in Matthew and Mark that many of the company did not know Him by sight. Judas had given them a sign, the sign of love, the kiss, so that they might know which one it is. When was that kiss given? It must have been given after the Lord had answered their question. The next moment brings His answer, "I am." It must be noticed that here, as it is in John iv:26, the word "he" is in italics, it is supplied. In chapter viii:58, He had told the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am."

Enraged by His use of the divine title, "I am," from which they surmised that He claimed to be the I am, Jehovah, they attempted to stone Him. Here once more He uses the same "I am." But now they are not picking up stones to stone Him, but when He had said, "I am," they all fell backward to the ground. What a spectacle it must have been when all these men, that great multitude, fell helpless, backward to the ground, while He stood there in all His dignity! It was a demonstration of His Deity and, as such, a miracle. Not one Roman soldier nor the Jewish officers could stand on their feet. An irresistible power prostrated them to the ground. The miracle occurred for two reasons. First to show to the disciples, and to His enemies as well, that He is the Lord of glory. It was His own omnipotent power which He displayed once more. For this reason it is embodied in the Gospel of John, written to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In the second place, it happened to show that His arrest and subsequent crucifixion did not take place because He could not help it, but because He was willing to have it so. Perhaps Psalm xxvii:2 may be taken as a prophecy of what happened here. "When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat me up, they stumbled and fell." Well has an ancient commentator said: "If He did this when about to be judged, what shall He do when He sits in judgment? If He did this on the eve of death, what shall He do when He comes to reign?" Then all His enemies will lick the dust. Then every knee must bow, of beings in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii:10, 11).

For the second time, probably after the whole company had risen to their feet, He asks the question, "Whom seek ye?" And when He spoke the second "I am," they did not fall to the ground. There was no second exhibition of His power, but He manifested His grace. "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." Then the Spirit of God reminds us that it was spoken, what He had said in His great prayer, "Of them which thou gavest me I have lost none." Willingly He stretched forth His hands, to let Himself be bound, on the condition that His own should be free. He is the Good Shepherd ready to give His life for the sheep.

Then Peter acted. He comes forward to resist, perhaps encouraged by the power which had been manifested. He had been sleeping when he should have been watching and praying. He acted in the same spirit in which he said to the Lord, when He had announced His passion, "Be it far from thee, O Lord!" His hasty action was out of keeping with the grace the Lord was showing. He marred it all when he drew the sword and dealt Malchus, the servant of the high priest, a blow which cut off his ear. All the other Gospel records mention this incident, but only John gives the name of the servant and the name of Peter. Peter probably tried to kill Malchus, but God in His mercy prevented this. As we learn from the Gospel of Luke, the Lord touched the ear of Malchus and healed him instantaneously. It was the last miracle of physical healing our Lord performed, and in it He manifested His wonderful grace, to one who was an enemy. Some of the present day "healers," who claim to do the same miracles of healing which Christ did, say that faith is necessary for healing. They declare where there is no true faith and trust in the Lord He is unwilling and unable to manifest His power. The incident here disproves their claims. This Jewish servant had no faith in Christ, nor did he trust in Christ for healing.

"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath; the cup which my Father hath given unto me shall I not drink it?" It was a rebuke to Peter. He wanted to prevent Him from drinking that cup, which the Father had given to Him, the cup concerning which He had pleaded a little while before in those memorable words, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine be done." He came to drink that cup and in perfect obedience, as the hour had come, He takes it to empty it to the last drop.

"The believer will note the bearing of our Lord throughout these closing scenes—His lowliness, His dignity, His infinite superiority to all who surrounded Him, friends or foes, His entire submission and withal His power intact. He is a Man, sent One of God, throughout. It is He who shelters and secures the disciples; it is He who offers Himself freely. The traitor and the band, the torches and the weapons, had all failed, if He had not been pleased in letting His own go to give Himself up. For this He had entered the world, and His hour was now come. But it was His own doing and according to the will of His Father."

Verses 12-14. These three verses give an incident in the passion of our Lord which is not mentioned by the other three Gospels. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Annas had been appointed high priest of the Jews in the year 7 A.D., but had been removed by the Roman Procurator several years previous, and Joseph Caiaphas, his son-in-law, had been appointed in his place. In Luke iii:2, both are called high priests, and in Acts iv:6 and xxiii:2, the title is given to Annas. This is not a contradiction. The probable explanation is that while Caiaphas held the office, he was really controlled by his father-in-law, whom the Jews probably regarded as their true high priest, in opposition to the Roman deposition of Annas. At any rate, we know from the Jewish historian, Josephus, that the office of the high priest, when our Lord was here, was characterized by disorders and irregularities. It seems Annas was the controlling spirit and a great politician. There were not fewer than twenty-eight high priests from the reign of Herod to the destruction of the temple by Titus in the year 70. Of these, five, besides Caiaphas, were sons of Annas.

They bound first the willing victim. If they had known that He whom they bound with cords is the Creator of all things, and that those hands uphold all things, and that some day He will be their judge, what terror would have struck their guilty consciences. They acted under the power of darkness and their eyes were blinded. But they needed not to bind Him. He would not have escaped to be free. He yielded Himself and gave Himself over to them, or they could not have bound Him. We are reminded by John that Caiaphas was he who gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient for one man to die for the people. (See John xi:49-51.)

Verses 15-27. While the other disciples were scattered two of them followed Jesus. Peter, as we know from the other Gospels, followed Him "afar off." He is making a feeble attempt to make good his boast. What feelings must have surged in his bosom! He loved the Lord. He is filled with anxious care; he wants to see what will happen to Him. Yet his first step towards his shameful denial was done when he followed Him afar off. He chose the middle of the road. Instead of clinging close to the Lord he lagged behind, and soon the enemy swept him off his feet.

There are men today who may well take a lesson from Peter. They claim to be the "middle of the road men."

They declare that they believe in the Bible, they believe in Christ, but they want to be charitable and not to be outspoken for the fundamental truths of the Gospel. They do not want to be classed with these premillennial conservatives, nor do they want to be classed with the Modernists. They keep in the middle of the road. We have watched some of them and found out later that the middle of the road led them to deny Christ. In our perilous times the safest place is on the Lord's side, not partly so, but wholly.

Who is the other disciple? Some have thought it was Judas. But there is no evidence whatever that it was the traitor. There is no difficulty in identifying this other disciple with John. In chapter xx:2, 3, 4 and 8 the same expression is used, and in these passages it is John; so it is John here also. John evidently was well acquainted in the palace of the high priest and knew him personally, so that he had no difficulty in entering in with the Lord. How the humble Galilean fisherman had become acquainted with the influential Caiaphas is not stated. Commentators have advanced all kinds of theories. One made the conjecture that John being a fisherman might have become acquainted with the high priest when he came to Jerusalem to sell his fish. It is of little profit to find out these minor details, which are omitted on purpose in the Word of God. Those who maintain that the other disciple was not John point to Acts iv:13, where Peter and John stood before Annas and Caiaphas, but both seemed to have been unknown to them. For this reason some suggested that the other disciple might have been Nicodemus, but he could hardly be called a disciple.

Peter stood outside. Admittance probably was refused to him by the doorkeeper, because he was a stranger. What a good thing it would have been for him if he had remained outside. But the other disciple was anxious for him to gain admittance also; he spoke to the woman who acted as doorkeeper. Little did he think of the consequences for his companion which his introduction to the girl at the door would have, by which Peter was enabled to enter. Someone said Peter should have gone away when the door was shut for him. "It was by God's providence that the door was shut. He got a warning then to leave off but would not. These impediments, cast in our way when we purpose to do a thing, should not be idly looked at." Yet the word spoken by our Lord concerning Peter's denial had to be fulfilled.

The portress recognized him. She must have seen him somewhere for she put the question to him at once, "Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?" Perhaps she only surmised this. Certainly she had not assumed a threatening or accusing attitude. The lie which Peter told when he answered, "I am not," was but the result of what had gone before. He had been self-confident. In the garden instead of watching and praying, he had relaxed and fallen asleep. Here is the fruit, so often repeated in the lives of the Lord's people. Here also Peter's impulsive character, so unstable, comes to the front. A short time ago he would face the garden mob single handed with a sword, and now he is so scared by a damsel and her question that he seeks refuge in a cowardly lie. He enters through lying and something worse follows. It was a cold night and there was a coal fire which was surrounded by the servants and officers, the enemies of Christ who had arrested Him and were now to drag Him from place to place. This miserable company Peter joined to warm himself too and to give the impression that he also belonged to this group. It was another lie, for by mingling with these enemies he tried to conceal his identity. And at the other end of the hall stood the Lord, a prisoner.

Then the judicial examination begins. This examination is not recorded in the preceding Gospel records. Annas asks Him two questions as to His disciples and as to His doctrine. The object of the first question was to get information about His followers and evidence against them. He ignores the first question and says, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whether the Jews always resort; and in secret I have said nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them, behold, they know what I said." It is a very dignified answer. He had taught for three years; all was done openly. Not like others who were deceivers did He plot in secret, but in many synagogues, besides in His temple visits He taught the truth. There was no need for

Annas to ask such a question. Furthermore he and his son-in-law Caiaphas had sent officers at a certain time to report His teaching. They had returned with the testimony that never spake man as He did. Why should then he, the judge, ask of a prisoner to say that which might be used against him? It was not fair nor reasonable. That there is a striking difference between the words of our Lord here, and the words which he used before Caiaphas and the council, as reported by Matthew, Mark and Luke, is known to all thoughtful readers of the Gospels. It is explained that here in John we have another examination before Annas which the Synoptics do not record at all.

Then one of the officers offended by His dignity and His just and fair demand, smote Him with his hand. The Greek literally rendered means "gave a blow on the face," which probably was done with a staff, in fulfilment of Micah v:8: "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." This was probably the first blow our blessed Lord received in His passion.

How calm and perfect is His answer to the insulting and painful blow! "If I have spoken ill, bear witness of the ill; but if well, why smitest thou Me?" His sublime perfection is seen in this terse answer. There was no defense from His side. Yet His answer is a rebuke. Luther remarked on this: "Christ forbids self-defense with the hand, but not with the tongue." In what a different manner Paul acted when he was treated in a similar way (Acts xxiii:3). Then Annas sent Him away to Caiaphas.

Peter was still warming himself as the Lord was led away. Perhaps the coal fire flared up and the company he had joined began to notice him. They may have noticed his Galilean dress and suspected him at once to be one of the disciples. "Art thou not also one of his disciples?" What will Peter say? Undoubtedly, he had watched from a distance what had been going on. He saw, too, how the officer had struck the face of the Lord. He fears the worst for himself and so he utters his second denial. "He denied and said, I am not." But something worse is in store for him. "One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" As he becomes the center of observation, one scans his features more closely and then expresses his conviction that he was surely in the garden with Him. And this one happened to be a relation of Malchus. Supposing it should be found out that he, Peter, wielded the sword which wounded Malchus, what would be the consequences for him? Poor Peter! for the third time he denied His Lord and Master, and as we learn from the other Gospels, he did this with a loud voice, cursing and swearing at the same time. Then the cock crowed. It was the awakening cry for Peter. It must have been to him a veritable thunderclap. The words of the Lord came back to him: "before the cock crows thou shalt deny Me thrice," and thrice he had denied Him. From the other Gospel records we learn that the Lord looked upon him as He left the hall, and Peter went out and wept bitterly.

The fear of man bringeth a snare, and "What blinding power of the enemy thus to involve a saint in direct and daring falsehood, and thus to dishonor Him, who was his life and salvation! But of what is not the heart capable when the Lord is not before it, but fear or lust or aught else by which Satan beguiles? God, however, took care that the dread of man to His dishonor should cover the guilty disciple with self-reproach and utter contempt and humiliation, when an eye-witness could brand him before all with his reiterated lying in denial of his Master."*

The denial of Peter has many lessons. It shows where a saint will drift to if he, like Peter, neglects to watch and to pray. It shows what is in our poor human hearts, what even His choicest saints are capable of doing. And it brings out the loving tenderness and mercy of our Lord in Peter's restoration. And He is still the same who "restoreth my soul."

Verses 28-32. Our Lord's examination before Caiaphas and the Jewish Sanhedrim, which the three preceding Gospels, the Synoptics, mention, is passed over by John and instead he describes more fully the trial before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, adding certain facts which the other Gospels do not state. There is no use to inquire into the reason why this is the case. If these documents were simply historical, produced by men who write history, criticism of their work and their motives would be in order. But they did not write as historians, but were the chosen instruments of the Spirit of God who guided their pens. The author of these records had His good reasons why He held back certain information from the three men who wrote their accounts many years before, and used John to add the things they had to omit. We know, however, the scope and purpose of each Gospel record accounts, at least partially, for these differences.

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*W. Kelly.

It was early in the morning when they led their willing victim from Caiaphas to the judgment hall. The Greek for "early" is the same used in chapter xx:1, so that it was between daybreak and sunrise. The judgment hall was the praetorium, the governor's palace. Josephus, the great Jewish historian gives the information that the governors appointed over Judea had their residences in Caesarea, but when they visited Jerusalem they used the palace of Herod for their residence.

The account shows the feverish haste with which these murderers pushed on. They could not wait till daybreak, but dragged the Son of God, before the day had fully come, into the presence of the Gentile official. When they reached the praetorium they halted. They feared defilement. According to the interpretation of the law by the Pharisees, entering the abode of a Gentile meant their defilement, and would exclude them from eating the passover (Num. ix:6-11).

The Lord Jesus had spoken of "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel" (Matt. xxiii:24), and had called them more than once "hypocrites." Such they were. They had scruples about entering the house of a pagan, but had none whatever in bringing false witness against the Lord of glory to secure His condemnation by fraud and violence. Ceremonial defilement they feared, but not the committing of the sin of all sins—the rejection of the Just One, whom they betrayed and murdered (Acts vii:52).

But is it any better today in Christendom? The Ritualist and the Rationalist manifest the same hypocrisy. The outside of the cup is kept clean, the inside is full of filth and abomination. The Mexican bandit, and others in countries where Rome rules, will be very conscientious in going to mass, and going through all Romish superstitious inventions, while at the same time he schemes and plans his crimes, which do not seem to affect his conscience in the least as long as he has done his superstitious ceremonies. So it is in ritualistic Protestantism. It is the same in Modernism. The Modernist hypocrite can make much about moral reform; speak of evils in the world which ought to be remedied, put on a goody-goody front as a minister of righteousness, but, at the same time, he can deny that which is the foundation of all righteousness in the world, the revelation of God in His holy Word, the Bible, and sneer at the Virgin-birth of our Lord, and in denying His Deity betray Him many times more than the Jews did when they haled Him before the Roman Governor.

Pilate, perhaps hearing the clamoring mob at such an early hour, or being notified by the guard, went out to them and said "What accusation bring ye against this man?" The Valerian law among the Romans demanded a definite charge against a person before that person could be condemned. So, as the highest magistrate, Pilate inquires as to the charge. The question put by Pilate was curt. They answered him in a disrespectful manner, which the proud Roman must have resented very much. "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee." The shrewd character of the Jew comes here to the front. The answer insinuates that the governor had said something foolish in demanding the nature of the accusation. "Do you think we would trouble you at this early hour if we brought to thee an innocent man and not an evil-doer?" But they aimed at something else. They tried to get the sentence of death signed without any hearing whatever before the civil court. "Is it not sufficient that we have found out ourselves that He is guilty? What is the use of having another examination? Pronounce the sentence of death!" The Governor answered them in another short sentence. "Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law." He evidently did not want to have anything to do with this case at all. From the other Gospels we learn that the motive of their accusation was "envy." Pilate's wife had also warned him not to have anything to do with this just person, for she had a significant dream about Him. The miserable coward he was, for political reasons, fearing man, he tried to evade the issue.

Perhaps Pilate thought they did not want Him to be executed, but that He should be chastised according to Roman law. If he did his wrong conception was at once dispelled by the answer from the Jews. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." The authority of the Roman government over the nation demanded that they had no longer the right to pronounce the sentence of death. The power which had conquered them had the exclusive right. They confessed themselves that what the prophets had predicted should happen had come to pass, when the iron heel of Gentile power would be upon the nation. But it also came about in this way, so that the prediction of our Lord might be fulfilled. At least two of the Lord's sayings are in view here. He had predicted several times that He would be delivered by them into the hands of the Gentiles. This was now being done. In chapter xii:33 He predicted also death by crucifixion. Stoning was the mode of death used by the Jews. It was a mob, and not the law, which stoned Stephen, the first martyr. Rome had invented a more horrible form of death. Criminals were put to death by crucifixion. This was now to be fulfilled, what He had said, that He should be lifted up.

Verses 33-40. From Luke xxiii:2 we learn that the Jews then stated their lying accusations. He called Jesus with a loud voice to follow him (the meaning of the Greek word) inside of the palace to speak with Him privately. What we read from verse 33 to the unanswered question in verse 38, "What is truth?" happened inside of the palace, and the mob outside did not hear a word of it. The first question which the Roman asked Him was the question concerning His Kingship. "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Pilate had evidently heard of the accusation brought against Him, and more than that, he could not have been ignorant of Jewish prophecy and the expectation of the coming of the Messiah, the son of David. The Roman historian Suetonius in his work states that at that time there was a widespread anticipation that a great king was about to take control of Jewish affairs and would rule in due time over the whole world. Pilate must have known of this. Each of the Gospels state this question of the governor, so that there can be no question it was uppermost in the mind of this man. He, therefore, examined Him concerning His kingship. Then he sentenced Him as King and had Him crucified as King, and put above the cross the fact that He is the King of the Jews, so that there might be no mistake about it. Strange it is in view of all these facts concerning the Lord Jesus Christ coming as the Messiah, the promised King, preaching the kingdom first to Israel, that certain teachers can deny this, and invent a theory which lacks scriptural support and which opens the door to the postmillennial hypothesis.

The Lord answered him with a question: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" Of course, He knew why Pilate had asked the question. He knew also the motive which had inspired it. He did not ask the question for information, but rather to speak through it to the conscience of the man who was to be His judge. If it had been a Roman officer who preferred this charge of being a rebel against the Government it would have been a serious matter, requiring the most painstaking examination. But the accusers were the Jews, saying that He claimed Kingship. But how could it be that the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities should complain of one of their own nation trying to emancipate them from the Roman yoke? Pilate knew how the Jews would have thrown off that yoke at any cost and welcomed any man who would lead a movement against the pagan oppressors. So the accusers were unwittingly the witnesses of His innocence. Of course, Pilate had never heard a word that the man who stood before him accused by the Jews had any desire whatever to lead a revolt against his Roman government and to set Himself up as king. And Pilate was not slow to see the point of the accused. His answer, "Am I a Jew?" shows that. He acknowledged that the accusation came from the Jews and therefore was a false accusation. With this answer he also voiced the fact that he, the Roman governor, despised the Jew. Many of the Roman authors and historians like Horace, Juvenal, Suetonius, Tacitus and Pliny, speak contemptuously of the Jews. We can imagine the sneering face of Pilate, when he spoke these words, as if he had been insulted. Then he added the truth, "thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?" With this sentence he shows that the Jews were the accusers and that he had no use for their charge as to his sedition. Then he appealed to the prisoner to tell him what He had done.

The first question Pilate had asked: "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" our Lord now takes up in His answer. "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." As Pilate was honestly perplexed He answered his question. Before Caiaphas and Herod He was silent. Later also He did not answer Pilate.

His answer has puzzled a good many. What did our Lord mean? In the mind of the pagan official the thought was uppermost as to the kingdom which the Lord would claim to originate and to control. The kingdoms which are of the world are established by human power, defended by the world's arms, and the world's money upholds them. "My kingdom is not of such a nature. When my kingdom comes," He wants to impress upon the mind of Pilate, "it is not established by the world." And so it will be when He returns as King and receives the kingdom, when all the kingdoms of this world will become His kingdom. It will come from above; not the world will give to Him the kingdom, but He will receive the kingdom from the hands of God His Father. If His kingdom were an earthly, worldly kingdom, such as the Roman empire, His servants would fight and prevent His condemnation.

The little word "*now*" is here of immense significance. "But now is My kingdom not from hence." The Jews had rejected Him. The promised and offered kingdom could not come. "*Now* My kingdom in temporal power and glory cannot come; it will come later but *now* the time is not. My rule is now of a different nature. In this dispensation I shall not have the earthly Kingdom to which I am entitled."

It seems the Governor was unable to grasp this answer. He seemed to be convinced that the Lord Jesus was not a political offender. This much Pilate had understood, that the Lord spoke of a kingdom which is now not of the world. If He has any kind of a kingdom, then He must be a king. That is why he asked next "Art Thou a king then?"

Jesus answered: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." The Lord bears witness here to the fact of His Kingship. He is a King. The original is best rendered, "Thou sayest, for I am a King." He gave Pilate to understand that He had not come into the world to build up a great kingdom by physical force, as is the case in a worldly kingdom. He came for a higher purpose. He came as a witness to the Truth, yea He Himself is the Truth. Three great facts are to be considered in this good witness which our Lord gave before Pilate (1 Tim. vi:13): (1) The Lord Jesus Christ is a King. As such He came, because He is according to the flesh the son of David, entitled to the throne of His father David. (2) The object of His incarnation was to testify to the Truth, to bear witness to it. His true humanity and His Deity are witnessed to by Himself. When He said, "for this end was I born" He states His true humanity, but when He declared "for this cause came I into the world" it is not a vain, unmeaning repetition of His birth, but shows that He pre-existed and came from above. (3) They only hear Him (receive Him) who are of the Truth. The meaning is that those proceeding from the truth, who are born again by the power of the truth and the Spirit of truth, hear Him.

Pilate had listened. But the words of the Lord had fallen on barren ground. He has no answer save the question "What is truth?" Was it the question of an honest inquirer? Had his conscience been touched? Would he know more? Was he exercised in his soul? Such was not the case with the proud Roman. The man who said shortly before, with a sneer, "Am I a Jew?" would not inquire of an accused Jewish prisoner what the truth is and thus show willingness to be taught by him. If the question had come from him as a seeker for the truth the incident would not have ended so abruptly. The Lord would have had something to say to the inquiring soul. It was a sneering word, this interjection, "What is truth?"* He turned suddenly around. He went out to face the murderous mob. He told them, "I find in Him no fault at all." What a statement! The judge who would sign ere long His death warrant must publicly declare that there is no fault in Him. He was found without spot and blemish as the sacrificial Lamb.

Then the politician comes out in all his lying characteristics. One only needs to watch certain politicians of our own day to discover that human nature has not changed a bit since that day. Pilate knows the man before him is innocent and guiltless and, therefore, he should be freed. But he is a politician and he must guard his own political interests. Supposing these Jews became offended? What will happen then? Perhaps a great disturbance, and the matter will be reported to Rome. It would not serve for his best interests. Our next chapter shows what finally induced him to pronounce the sentence (xix:12). Here he tries to wiggle out of the perplexing situation. They had a Passover custom to have released by the government a notable prisoner (Mark xv:8). How and when this custom originated we do not know. He takes refuge under this custom. There was another prisoner, a robber, by name of Barabbas. He was also a murderer (Acts iii:14). He was a lawless outcast. Pilate makes the proposition, "Will you that I release unto you the king of the Jews?" Back comes the awful cry, "Not this man—Barabbas!" What sin in all the blackness of it and sinfulness of it, is here revealed, along with Satan's power. Oh! the horror of it, that man rejects the Holy One, the Just One. Such are our hearts.

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*This famous inquiry of Pilate is certainly not the inquiry of an honest seeker for truth (Chrysostom), for he does not even wait for an answer; nor, apparently, the disconsolate question of one who despaired of ever arriving at a standard of truth (Olshausen); for there is no evidence that he ever sought the truth, either in philosophy or religion; nor the scoffing question of one who believes that the truth can never be found (Alford), and whose modern type is the positivist, who believes that all creeds are false, and God, immortality and the soul are unknowable, for there is nothing to indicate that such problems had any interest for him. It is rather asked, half in pity, half in contempt; the question of the practical man in the world, to whom this conception of a kingdom built on truth and maintained without an army and exchequer seemed but the baseless phantom of a harmless religious enthusiast (Ellicott). These are the views of four of the leading commentators.

Bishop Ryle's remarks on this incident are helpful and worth repeating: "Even here at this juncture we have an illustration of the great Christian doctrine of substitution. Barabbas, the real criminal, is acquitted and let go free. Jesus, innocent and guiltless, is condemned and sentenced to death. So it is in the salvation of our souls. We are all by nature as Barabbas, and deserve God's wrath and condemnation; yet he was accounted righteous and set free. The Lord Jesus Christ is perfectly innocent and yet He is counted a sinner, and put to death that we may live. Christ suffers, though guiltless, that we may be pardoned. We are pardoned, though guilty, because of what Christ has done for us. We are sinners, yet counted righteous. Christ is righteous, yet counted a sinner. Happy is that man who understands and believes this doctrine, who has laid hold on it by faith for the salvation of his own soul."

CHAPTER XIX

Verses 1-5. The opening verses of this chapter bring us face to face with the sufferings of our blessed Lord and the shame which was heaped upon Him. We behold Him scourged, crowned with a cruel crown of thorns, mocked, dishonored, smitten and then made a public spectacle. For the heart of every child of God this is a deeply affecting scene. As we read it and mediate on it the eyes fill with tears, the very innermost soul is moved, and we praise Him that He suffered thus in our stead.

What an awful sentence—"then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him!" The scourging of criminals, beating them with rods, floggings with whips, have been in use among many nations, and are still used as penal measures among civilized nations. Cruel Rome outdid all others in the ancient world in torturing their helpless prisoners with the scourge. According to Josephus and other sources, Rome tormented malefactors in every possible way before they were put to death. In many cases the scourging with a cruel, knotted scourge in which sharp pieces of iron and nails were embedded, continued till the bones were exposed and the victim died. When we think of the body of our Lord, the body which knew no sin, the body which was never racked by disease, that tender body, which He yielded in our behalf, we cannot even imagine how painful this scourging must have been to Him. Some have taught that Pilate did the scourging himself, because it says that he took Him and scourged Him. The statement means that he gave command that this be done. Rough, half-barbarian soldiers were His tormentors. As they hated the Jews, they were only too willing to treat Him with the utmost cruelty. The place where it was done was the common hall (Matt. xxvii:27), a filthy guard room. The loving substitute of sinners suffered stripes in our behalf (Isa. liii:5; 1 Peter ii:24).*

After the scourging was over, which Pilate had commanded as a compromise to save the Lord from the death penalty (Luke xxiii:16), the soldiers began their mocking torments. They had heard of the accusation and the claim that He is the King of the Jews. When they were through with their bloody work, and their victim stood bleeding before them, they began their cruel sport. One perhaps suggested a coronation. "Let us crown him king." "But what crown is He to wear?" "Make it a crown of thorns!" Thorns are very plentiful in Palestine, as the silent witnesses that God's curse rests upon the land. It did not take long to gather thorns and to weave them into the form of a crown. Then they pressed this instrument of torture upon His blessed brow, so that His precious blood streamed down His face.

But little did these soldiers know what they were doing. They only had one thought, mocking the King of the Jews and venting their hatred in cruelty upon Him. They did not know that they were witnessing through their vicious action to the fact that their victim was bearing the curse of sin upon His head. Thorns are the emblems of the curse which rests upon creation. Thorns came into existence after man's fall (Gen. iii:18). Unknowingly the rude soldiers demonstrated with their crown of thorns that the Lord Jesus is the curse-bearer.

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*The teachings of certain "divine healers" including the Pentecostal leader, Mrs. McPherson of Los Angeles, that our Lord was scourged for the physical healing of our bodies, is a miserable, unscriptural invention.

What became of the crown of thorns? We do not mean what became of it after it had served its purpose. Hundreds of Romish churches in Italy, Spain and Mexico claim to possess pieces of the original crown. If we were to collect them we could form a thorn hedge a few miles long. What we mean is, was the crown of thorns at once removed when the mock scene had been ended? Or did this crown remain on His brow? We believe some of the master painters, who were godly men, had the right conception when they pictured Christ crucified with the crown of thorns still on His head. It was on the cross He bore the curse.

They also put a mock royal robe upon Him. It was a purple robe, for purple was the color of Roman imperialism. In the examination in Luke xxiii:11, we read that before Herod, He was likewise mocked by soldiers, who arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, in which He was sent to Pilate. We do not know if it was the same garment which was now put upon Him. It was done in mockery; the vile soldiers showed their contempt. It was a Roman custom whenever a new emperor ascended the throne to greet him with the two words "*Ave Imperator*"—Hail Emperor! This custom they imitated, mocking the Lord with their "Hail, King of the Jews."

From the other Gospels we learn that they bowed their knees in mock worship and also put a reed, as a mock sceptre, into His hands. Finally they spit upon Him. Oh! what awful hatred they manifested against the Holy and Spotless One. Man was shown what he is, and what he is capable of doing through the power of Satan, which was manifested in this scene, in both Jew and Gentile. They also smote Him with their hands. This was also probably done with a rod, so that He was bruised afresh—"bruised for our iniquities." One act of scorn and contempt followed the other. All man could do to Him was done under the energizing power of the prince of this world.

The commentators of the early Church applied all these sufferings, and the shame connected with it, to us for whom He suffered. He wore the crown of thorns that we might wear a crown of glory. He was clothed with a robe of shame and contempt that we might wear the robe of righteousness and glory. He bore all the contempt so that we might wear all the glory.

Then Pilate appeared again before the Jewish mob. He made an announcement: "Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him." For the second time the Roman Governor bears witness to the innocency of the Lord Jesus in the same words as he did before, "I find no fault in Him." After this testimony had been given the Lord Jesus came forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. "And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man!" Artists have painted this great scene, but no brush could depict Him as He was led forth from the filthy guard room, with His face marred, His back a mass of wounds, the blood trickling down His face as the crown of thorns remained on His head. If angels can weep, all heaven must have been in tears, while demons laughed and sneered.

Behold the Man. Ecce Homo. Was it contempt or was it pity? Perhaps it was more the latter than the former. Pilate had watched the patient sufferer.

Just as Isaiah had predicted, He opened not His mouth. While others, who were scourged and tortured cursed their tormentors and uttered fearful shrieks and groans, the Lamb of God was silent. Pilate knew He was guiltless. Thus pointing to Him, the thorn-crowned, bleeding Man of sorrows, clothed in the mock robe, the Roman tried to awaken contempt and pity in the hearts of the clamoring crowd. Like the soldiers who were ignorant of their doings, so Pilate did not know what he was saying. "Behold the Man:" This is the message which would be sounded all over the world—Behold the Man—Behold Him, the Lamb of God!

Verses 6-11. Pilate, who evidently tried to avoid the condemnation of the Lord, because he knew He was innocent, had miserably failed. His attempt to produce contempt for such a miserable king had failed. Greater still was the failure to create pity. Here were hearts of stone, hearts which knew no pity, but under the influence of the murderer from the beginning, these hearts would not be content with anything less than His death. As soon as He appeared and they laid their eyes on Him, a mighty shout arose, led by the chief priests and their attendants—Crucify! Crucify! Crucify! Let it be noticed that the chief priests were the foremost in raising the cry for crucifixion. It is a painful fact that in every age, none have been such hard, cruel, unfeeling, and bloody-minded persecutors of God's saints, as the "ministers of religion."

Then Pilate, in order to be relieved from the task of condemning an innocent person, said, "Take ye Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him." He seemed to be vexed and irritated. In his anger he said, "do it yourselves." If they had taken him at his word he would have been unable to permit it, for it was against the law for the Jews to put any criminal to death. For the third time he uttered the significant verdict, "I find no fault in Him."

When the chief priests discovered that the political accusation had been a failure they appealed to their own law. "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made himself the Son of God." The law which they had in mind is the law concerning a blasphemer (Lev. xxiv:16). The penalty demanded by the law was death by stoning. As we have learned in the study of the Gospel of John, three times before the Jews tried to stone Him, and each time when He claimed equality with God. They changed therefore the charge to blasphemy. It frightened the superstitious pagan when he heard that the man whom he had scourged, who had been tortured and mocked by his soldiers, might be after all a supernatural being. The warning his wife had sent to him may at this time have come back to his memory. If he was afraid before, he became the more afraid now. Therefore he went back to the hall and spoke once more to the prisoner.

Having heard from the chief priests that He claimed to be divine, Pilate asked the Lord, "Whence art thou?"

The question suggests that he was eager to hear from His own lips who He is, from where He has come. Pilate knew undoubtedly Roman and Greek mythologies, that gods visited the earth; he was acquainted with these superstitious beliefs. It may be that his question was put to ascertain whether the prisoner was not after all a supernatural being. Perhaps he hoped to hear something positive from the lips of the Lord Jesus which would enable him to dismiss the whole case and thus deliver Him from the hands of the Jews.

But he was doomed to disappointment in this expectation. Jesus gave him no answer. He stood silently before the man who was to be His judge. Why did our Lord keep His lips closed at this extremely critical moment? Though our Lord was now delivered unto the Gentiles and had been scourged and mocked, He was still the omniscient Lord, who knows all things. He knew what was going on in the heart of Pilate; He knew the state of his soul. The Lord had given him the truth. He had rejected it. In spite of the conviction that the Lord Jesus was without fault, Pilate had Him cruelly scourged, and permitted the soldiers to crown Him with a crown of thorns, to spit in His face and to bruise Him. He deserved no further notice. He was unworthy of an answer.

But there is another reason why our Lord was silent and refused to answer the question. Pilate was an instrument of Satan. He belonged to the seed of the serpent, and the old serpent whose chief aim has always been and still is to prevent God's eternal purposes in redemption, would have liked to use Pilate in keeping back the Lord Jesus from going to the cross, where Satan would be stripped of his power. He had tried this before. It was his aim on the mount of temptation, when he offered the kingdoms of the world to the Lord. When Peter said, after the Lord Jesus had announced His coming death, "Be it far from Thee, Lord" it was the same being who used Peter to keep the Lord from the cross. The Lord knew who stood behind Pilate and what would have happened had He answered Pilate's question. Supposing He had told him, "I am the Lord, God is my Father; I am from above"; and at the same time manifested some of His hidden glory, it would have probably impressed Pilate in such a way that he would have refused to go a step further and never permitted the crucifixion. The Lord knew His hour was come. He was subject to the Father's will. It was His will that He should now be obedient unto death, the death of the cross. He knew the Father wanted Him to be silent and refuse the answer to Pilate's question.

It is plainly to be seen that Pilate was very much vexed at the silence of his prisoner. "Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" And now the Lord answers him in a calm and dignified manner. He had spoken of power to crucify and power to release. He gives him to understand that he could have no power whatever except it were given to him from above, that is from God. It was the will of God which permitted the use of this power, for all that the Prophets had spoken concerning His sufferings and His sacrificial death was now to be accomplished. God's will had to be done. But this did not leave Pilate guiltless. But the sin of the Jews, the sin of Caiaphas, of Judas, along with the other chief priests, was greater. They were not like the pagan Pilate, in ignorance as to who He is, for they knew the display of His divine power and grace in their midst, as well as the testimony of their own Scriptures concerning His person. "On account of this he that delivered Me up to thee hath greater sin."

Verses 12-18. Evidently a great impression had been made upon the Roman Governor. We do not know what meaning Pilate attached to the words which the prisoner before him had just spoken. It is evident, on account of what our Lord had said, Pilate sought to release Him. More than ever he seemed to be convinced of the innocency of the meek sufferer. We do not know what means he employed when he sought to release Him. The Jews were aware of his attempt. They knew of Pilate's determination to release Him whom they hated. A great uproar followed Pilate's weak effort. Behind the Jews stood Satan's power and he inspired them to speak as they did. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." The words the Jews spoke were sheer mockery. The people who hated the Roman government and its emperor, suddenly make it appear that they wish to defend the Caesar in Rome and stand up for his rights, in order that He who is of their own race might be condemned to death. What hypocrisy! And Pilate now fully manifests his abominable character.

Who was Pilate? It is supposed that he was a freedman. About the year 26 A. D. he had succeeded Valerius Gratus as procurator of Judea and Samaria. This position he held for ten years. Josephus records the fact that he hated the whole Jewish race. He also was tyrannical toward the Samaritans. They entered a complaint against him and he had to go to Rome to defend himself. Before he arrived, Tiberius Caesar, whom he feared, had died. According to the historian Eusebius Pilate committed suicide.

Pilate knew that the Lord Jesus was innocent. He had made a number of times a public declaration to this effect. "I find no fault in Him" was the verdict of the Roman judge. Finally this conviction had become so strong that he sought to release Him. Then came the threatening cry of the Jewish mob. His mind must have worked fast. He knew that the Roman imperator whom he served, Tiberius Caesar, was a very suspicious monarch. As Tacitus and Suetonius, the Roman historians, record Tiberius feared constantly a revolt against him, and any suspicious character among his appointed officers was dealt with by him with utmost cruelty. Pilate also knew the maliciousness of the Jews, that they would report the case to Rome; he knew they would use it as an evidence that he is no friend of Tiberius in permitting a conspirator to plot against the government. He realized that Tiberius would be displeased, and that in all probability if the report reached Rome it would cost him his position, if not his life. Perhaps he glanced once over at the prisoner before him and then he trampled upon his conscience and his convictions and fell in line with the Jewish murderers.

He did not speak a word. Jesus is brought forth while he took his place upon the judgment seat, called in Hebrew, Gabbatha. The judgment seat consisted in an elevated platform in the open air. The pavement mentioned was a tessellated or mosaic square upon which the judgment seat, the **Bema,** stood. The word Gabbatha means a raised place. What a solemn moment it was! The Son of God, the Lord of glory stands bound, crowned with the crown of thorns, His blessed visage marred and bleeding before Pontius Pilate. A hush of satisfaction must have come upon the Jewish mob of priests, scribes and elders as they realized that the moment had come when their satanic plottings were to be crowned with success. Angels looked on while demons sneered.

It was the preparation of the Passover. This means that the day was set apart for the preparation of the Passover Sabbath. John therefore marks very accurately and precisely the day of crucifixion. It was the day preceding the Passover Sabbath, also called the great Sabbath. And He who is about to be condemned is the true Passover Lamb. It was about the sixth hour. If we read the account of Mark we find that he states it was the third hour (Mark xv:25).

This presents a difficulty and the fact that Mark mentions the third hour and John the sixth hour has been held up by critics, modernists and similar infidels, as a glaring contradiction. We acknowledge the difficulty but not the contradiction. Many attempts have been made to solve this problem. It has also been pointed out that five manuscripts, called uncials, and four cursives read in the original or in corrections "the third hour." However, the most ancient manuscripts read the sixth hour. The most satisfactory solution is that Mark reckons according to Jewish time and John employs the Roman mode of reckoning, which was from midnight to noon, as we do. That this must be correct may also be adduced from the fact that Pilate's wife sent a message in which she spoke of suffering much "to-day in a dream because of Him" (Matth. xxvii:19). Furthermore, we must also notice that John says "about the sixth hour"; it was about that time when the cry to crucify Him was raised, while Mark gives the third hour as the actual time of the crucifixion itself. John undoubtedly uses in his Gospel record the reckoning of time according to the civil day. (See chapters i:39; iv:6, 52.)

It was about the sixth hour when Pontius Pilate opened his lips again, saying, "Behold your King!" Why did he speak thus again, when in his heart he had fully decided to put Him to death? Was it the final, feeble attempt to have Him released, or was it mockery? We believe it was the latter. It was sarcasm addressed to the Jews whom he despised so much. Look at Him! This thorn-crowned figure, torn and bleeding, helpless and harmless—this is your king! His mockery and sarcasm was followed by a tremendous outburst. "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!" Poor blinded mob headed by their own religious hierarchy! If they had but known their own Scriptures they would have seen that they were fulfilling what their prophets had predicted (Isaiah xlix:7; liii:2).

We can see the sneer on Pilate's lip as he said in his final word, "Shall I crucify your king?" Then the voices of the chief priests were heard above the rest of the murderous rabble, "We have no king but Caesar!" And so to-day the leaders of the Christ-rejecting rabble are the alleged and accredited preachers and teachers in Christendom, who deny the Master who bought them. Fatal word it was, "We have no king but Caesar!" With this brief sentence they renounced the faith of their fathers and the truth God had given to them, and even God Himself. Their fathers, when they asked for a king in the days of Samuel, had rejected God from being their King. After the mad king had proven a failure God gave to the nation David, the man after His own heart. In him and his kingdom, as well as in Solomon his son, God foreshadowed the true King and His kingdom. That promised King was to come from the loins of David, David's son and David's Lord. Prophet after prophet spoke of that King and the glories of His kingdom. Generations after generations waited for Him to come. When the fullness of time had come He came, Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matth. i:1). He came as King, offered the promised kingdom to Israel, manifested His power as King and witnessed to His kingship. And now the chief priests declare with one utterance that the only king they know of is the Gentile ruler in Rome. It was the complete evidence or their apostate condition. Their declaration has come upon their own heads, for ever since the Gentile world power has domineered over them and the nation has had her well deserved history of blood, tears and sorrow as Jerusalem has been trodden down by the Gentiles. Nor will there be a change till the day arrives when the rejected King returns and a believing remnant welcomes Him as the Redeemer-King.

Perhaps it was at this point that Pilate washed his hands in their presence saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it" (Matth. xxvii:24). And their answer was, "His blood be upon us and on our children."

Pilate then delivered Him to be crucified. Luke tells us that Pilate pronounced the death sentence. "Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required" (Luke xxiii:24). He delivered Him to their will and the willing victim was led away, led as a lamb to the slaughter and never opening His mouth, as Isaiah had predicted over 700 years before.

It was the custom of that day that condemned criminals had to carry the instrument of torture and of death. And so our Lord bore His cross. What kind of a cross was it? We know that four times the cross is spoken of in the New Testament as a tree (Acts v:30, x:39, xiii:29; 1 Peter ii:24). Then in Gal. iii:13 it is also stated, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." We know from classical literature that often a forked tree was used instead of a manufactured cross. To this must be added the meaning of the Latin for cross-bearer, which literally means "forked-tree bearer." It seems there is some ground for the view that it was a forked tree making a cross. On the other hand the universal tradition of the Church and art of the earliest day is that it was a piece of wood with a transverse piece fixed across it. There is no discrepancy between John and the Synoptics. The latter tell us that Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to bear it instead of the Lord. The cross was laid upon Him and He probably dragged it along for some distance till the executioners, the rough Roman soldiers feared that He might break down and succumb under the burden. We do not say that He might have succumbed, but that the soldiers probably feared it and therefore pressed the Cyrenian into service.

That our Lord bore the cross fulfills another type. Abraham put the wood for the burnt-offering upon the back of Isaac. The Hebrew commentary *Bereshith rabba* says that Abraham laid the wood upon Isaac "in the form of a cross." He was led forth outside of the city to a place called Golgotha. Golgotha means the same as the Latin Calvaria, the place of a skull. This place cannot be located, the only thing we know is that it was without the gate, as Paul writes in the Hebrew epistle "Jesus suffered without the gate." The sin-offering on the Day of Atonement was to be carried "without the camp" (Lev. xvi:27). Why the place was called "a skull" we do not know, for a certainty. Many conjectures have been made. In many hymns and poems Calvary is spoken of as a hill, or a mountain.

There is a green hill far away
Without the city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified
And died to save us all.

If it was "a green hill" it certainly was not far away. But where in Scripture do we find it stated that Golgotha was a hill or a mountain? There is not a single passage which would warrant such a belief. Later in this chapter we read that in the place where He was crucified there was a garden (verse 41). It was a garden where Adam fell and where the first announcement of redemption was made. In a garden the last Adam met the penalty and fulfilled the promise.

It is noteworthy that no inspired pen enters into a detailed description of the crucifixion itself. "They crucified Him there." It was indescribable. For this reason we do not attempt, as others have done, to draw upon the imagination and picture the awful scene when the Lamb of God was nailed to that cross of shame, a suffering which we cannot fully understand. John also mentions that others were crucified with Him; He in the midst. Another prophetic utterance is seen fulfilled, "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. liii:12). What happened to these malefactors John does not record as the other three Gospels do. The one to the right turned to Him in the last moments of his sinful life and believing on Him was saved; the other to the left died in his sins, an unrepenting sinner, and was lost.

Verses 19-22. It was customary to bear before the criminal led away to the place of execution an inscription which designated his crime; this was subsequently nailed to the cross, as a warning to others. Pilate put over the cross of our Lord the inscription, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." It was written in three languages, in Latin (the political court language); in Greek (the language of the Gentiles) and in Hebrew, rather Aramaic (the sacred religious language). As it was near the city many Jews who passed by, probably along the highway, read it. Here again, Pilate acted without knowing what he did. He meant it as an insult to the Jews. They were not slow to recognize this, and therefore the chief priests tried to have it changed. But the inscription showed to all who passed by that Jesus really was hanging on that cross, that He was not released, but suffered on the cross, and, furthermore, the inscription made it clear that He is the King of the Jews, the Son of David, the Messiah. Being in the three great languages of the times, Jews and Gentiles read it, and as they passed on they spread the news that one by name of Jesus, the King of the Jews, had been crucified at the time of the Passover.

But the inscription produced two results apart from the anger of the chief priests who wanted to have it written in a different way. We read in Mark's Gospel, "The chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him." The inscription produced vile mockery. But it produced a most blessed fruit. It seems to us that the thief at His right hand must have glanced at that inscription. Over the crosses of the two malefactors were written the shameful record of their crimes—thieves and murderers. Over His cross, the Man in the middle, no crime was written, but only the terse sentence, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." And the thief must have read it, and reading, he believed that He is the King. He rebuked his companion in sin. He declared, because he believed, that the Lord Jesus Christ had done nothing amiss. Then he turned to Him with that great and wonderful request, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." And the suffering Lord answered him and his faith with the blessed assurance, "Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise." In all probability the inscription of Pilate written in ignorance and out of spite helped to save the soul of the dying thief.

The final word of Pilate is, "What I have written, I have written." Well commented Augustinus on this sentence, saying, "If a man like Pilate can say, what I have written I have written, and will not alter it, can we think that God doth write any in His book and blot it out again?"

Verses 23-24. The account which John gives of this incident is more complete than the account in the synoptic Gospels. (See Matt. xxvii:35; Mark xv:24; Luke xxiii: 34). After the bloody work of crucifixion had been done the four soldiers (called a quaternion) detailed to do this work remained. It seems it was a Roman custom, as it is still in some countries, that the executioners received the clothing of the condemned. They divided therefore the garments of our Lord into four parts, so that each soldier received a share. What these garments were we do not need to specualte about, for it is of little interest. But one garment is specially mentioned in the record, the seamless coat woven from the top throughout. In the eyes of the soldiers it must have had some value. It was probably the outer garment, and it is possible that the soldiers knew that people had touched the hem of this garment and had been healed. If they knew of this it may have increased the value of the coat in their eyes. The coat was probably a gift of some of the women who ministered unto Him (Luke viii:1-3). They agreed not to tear this seamless coat into four parts but to gamble for it. Dice were extensively used among the old Romans, as they are still used for the same purpose.

This incident shows the awful hard-heartedness of man, the vile depths into which sin has plunged him. A little distance away stood the cultured, the religious scribes and priests sneering, mocking and insulting the crucified One.

Their hearts just as vile and wicked as the hearts of the four soldiers. These gambled right beneath the cross. They sat down cooly under a dying man to wrangle for His garment, and arbitrate their avaricious differences by casting dice for His tunic, with hands spotted with spattered blood, warm and yet undried upon them. If they but had known that that precious blood flowing from the veins of the crucified Lord was shed in their own behalf! What became of the seamless garment? No one knows. In Treves dark, heathen, lying Rome exhibits the so-called "holy coat," claiming to be the seamless robe of our Lord. It is one of the scandalous deceptions of the mother of harlots and the mother of ignorance. No sane person will believe such humbuggery practiced for filthy lucre's sake.

But all was done in fulfillment of prophecy. A thousand years before the Holy Spirit witnessed in the xxii Psalm as to this incident. It is one of the many evidences of the marvelous and minute fulfillment of prophecy. The very minuteness of it bears witness to the accurate reality of prophecy.

Verses 25-27. This incident of His loved ones standing by the cross is not recorded by the other Gospels. It is a most blessed scene. Mary the mother of Jesus, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene had taken their places by the cross, surrounded by the taunting Jews and the gambling soldiers, to show to the very last their unswerving affection for Him. When we remember that our Lord was a condemned criminal, peculiarly hated by the chief priests, executed by Roman soldiers, the faithfulness and courage of these holy women can never be sufficiently admired. As long as the world stands they supply a glorious proof of what grace can do for the weak, and of the strength that love to Christ can supply. When all men but one forsook our Lord, more than one woman boldly confessed Him. Women, in short, were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb.*

Mary the mother of our Lord is mentioned the only time here in the passion of our Lord. Rome constantly speaks of her as the "Virgin Mary," a title which is not used in Scripture, but she is always called, the mother of our Lord. Only once more is she mentioned in Scripture, in the first chapter of Acts. It is evident that the Holy Spirit anticipated the idolatry which apostate Rome would practice with her person and therefore He has but little to say about her person. She probably had come from Galilee to attend the annual Passover feast and may have been also a witness of other phases of the suffering of her virgin-born Son. She was, of course, no longer young, as she is so frequently pictured by artists, but must have been close to fifty years. What she must have suffered when she looked up and saw Him to whom she had given birth, hanging in agony on that cross of shame can hardly be imagined. Old Simeon's prediction was then fulfilled. "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also" (Luke ii:35).

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*Expository thoughts on John.

A still more touching scene follows. John the writer of this Gospel stood there also. In true humility he mentions himself last and then not by name, but as elsewhere in this Gospel, as the disciple whom Jesus loved. While our Lord suffered as the sacrificial Lamb, He manifested perfect human affection and sympathy. As He looked upon the little group, so faithfully sharing His rejection also, He knew what was going on in the mother heart. His mighty love and sympathy was not altered by His intense physical suffering. He had prayed a little while before, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." He spoke to the dying thief words of love and assurance. And He now addressed His suffering mother. Translated literally it is: "Woman! Look! Thy Son!" and to John "Look! Thy mother!" In these words He made gracious provision for His mother. This certainly is sufficient evidence that Joseph, the husband of Mary had died and also that she had no one else to take care of her. The Lord therefore commended her to the care of the beloved disciple. It is also highly significant that our Lord did not address her as "Mother," but spoke to her in the same term He had used at the marriage supper of Cana, "Woman." Bishop Ryle remarks on this: "I cannot help thinking that, even at this awful moment, He would remind her that she must never suffer herself or others to presume on the relationship between her and Him, or claim any supernatural honor on the ground of being His mother. Henceforth she must daily remember, that first aim must be to live the life of faith as a believing woman, like all other Christian women. Her blessedness did not consist in being related to Christ according to the flesh, but in believing and keeping Christ's word. I firmly believe that, even on the cross, Jesus foresaw the future heresy of 'Mary-worship.'" A German commentator says: "Our Lord's design was not to provide for John, but to provide for His mother"; while Dean Alford observed: "The Romanist idea that the Lord commended all His disciples, as represented by John, to the patronage of His mother, is simply absurd."

And John obeyed at once and ever after he took care of Mary, the mother of our Lord. Where John lived, how long Mary lived, are questions which cannot be answered, though many traditions are about, but they are unreliable.

Verses 28-30. John does not say anything about the three hours of darkness and the momentous utterance which came from our Saviour's lips: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" This is passed over by John. Nor is any mention made of the rending of the veil, the earthquake, the centurion's confession. These omissions have often been pointed out by critics as demonstrating a human and fallible authorship. In reality they are evidences of verbal inspiration, for the Gospel of John shows our Lord in His essential Deity and as the Eternal Life. As the Son of God, the maker of all things in fellowship with the Father. His sacrificial death is set forth in the fourth Gospel. The omissions are for a very good purpose. But we shall point out more of that as we meditate on this section.

What John reports now must have followed the three hours of darkness. That is immediately after He had commended His mother to the care of the beloved disciple, the darkness, the mysterious darkness enshrouded the cross. Out of that darkness came but one utterance, so awfully deep that no saint has ever sounded its depths.

What a majestic statement it is which we find in verse 28! "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." All through His suffering He was perfectly conscious, and He knew all He had to suffer beforehand and all which was to be accomplished by His suffering and death. He knew the betrayal of Judas, His arrest in the garden, the trial, the scourging, the crown of thorns, the mockery, the shame and physical suffering connected with the cross. He knew that in the three hours of darkness He would be made sin and drink the cup of judgment in the place of guilty and lost sinners. And now, the three hours passed. He knew all things were accomplished. One Scripture He knew was still unfulfilled. It is written in Psalm lxix:21 "* * * in my thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." He knew this had also to be accomplished. In Matthew xxvii:34 we read that they offered Him vinegar and gall, which He refused. It was before they drove the nails through His blessed hands and feet. As it was a stimulant to deaden pain He refused to drink it. But now He suffered intense thirst. It was prophetically described a thousand years before by David's inspired pen. "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to My jaws, and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death" (Psalm xxii:15). The two little words "I thirst" tell us of the physical agony through which He passed. This simple statement shows what He must have suffered. His suffering was not miraculously overcome, but He suffered really and in a manner which was indescribable. A commentator says: "The torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst, in the complaint of the rich man who begged for a drop of water to cool his tongue. To that everlasting thirst we had all been condemned, if Christ had not suffered on the cross, and said 'I thirst.'" He suffered thirst that we might thirst no more but drink the water of life freely. And He spoke thus expressing His intense agony, that at the same time the Scripture might be fulfilled. A soldier, perhaps moved with pity, filled a sponge with vinegar, which was in a vessel nearby, put it on hyssop and reaching up put it to His mouth. Here too is a deep allusion to the sacrificial work of the divine sufferer. Hyssop was used in sprinkling the door posts with blood in the Passover night. It was also used in sprinkling with blood and water the book of the law, and the people (Heb. x:19). So small a thing as hyssop was not overlooked in the fulfillment of His redemption work.

Immediately after He had received the vinegar He said: "It is finished!" and He bowed His head and delivered up His Spirit. The synoptic Gospels do not record this majestic, unfathomable utterance. Matthew writes: "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the Spirit" (Matt. xxvii:50). Mark records the same. Luke states: "When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit, and having said thus He gave up the Spirit" (Luke xxiii:46). From the testimony of the synoptic Gospels we learn that our Lord must have uttered the word which John records, "It is finished!" with a loud voice. In the Greek it is one word—*Tetelstai.* As He uttered this one word with a loud voice it means a shout of triumph and of victory. With every phase of His redemption work a shout is connected. As the risen One, He greeted His disciples with a shout of Joy—All hail! which means literally "Rejoice!" He went up with a shout, and some day He is coming back with a shout (1 Thess. iv:16-18).

But who can tell what this one word "It is finished!" means? It is as glorious as it is inexhaustible and unsearchable. Never before and never after was spoken such a marvelous word, which means so much. No Saint is able to measure the depths of this triumphant shout. It means that His great sacrificial work, the sin-bearing, was now finished. All that needed to be done to satisfy the righteousness of God and to vindicate His holiness was finished; peace was now made in the blood of His cross; all that God in His eternal counsel had purposed was finished; prophecies and types relating to His matchless atoning work were finished. Yea, all was finished to reach down to man in his deepest degradation and to save him to the uttermost, so that the lost, the guilty, the hell-deserving sinner becomes, trusting in Him, a child of God and an heir of glory. All is finished to put on the side of the believer every spiritual blessing which an infinite God is able to bestow. But all these statements we have made are but the A. B. C. of the meaning of this great utterance of the Lamb of God.

At the close of the Twenty-second Psalm, the Psalm which tells out so fully His suffering and His glory, we find a word which is equivalent to the exclamation "It is finished!" There we read "That He hath done." If we ask what has He done or finished we find an answer in the preceding verses. There we read that Israel will yet accept Him and the ends of the world shall turn to the Lord. All this was done by Him on the cross. Twice in Revelation we find the same expression. In chapter xvi:17 there is heard a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done." The seventh angel poured out the vial; the complete end of man's day has come and the day of the Lord with millennial blessing and glory is now ushered in. The foundation for all these blessings was laid by Him in His finished work on the cross. One more we read the same statement in Revelation. "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxi:5-6).

And after the triumphant "*Tetelstai*"—"It is finished," He bowed His blessed thorn-crowned head and delivered up His spirit. In Luke's Gospel we read that our Lord said: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." John does not record this for He writes of Him as the Son of God and as such, one with the Father, unforsaken by the Father (Chapter xvi:32) He did not need to commend Himself to the Father. The expression "He delivered up His spirit" is nowhere else used in the Bible of a dying person. We die because we cannot help it, but His death was a voluntary action. He delivered up His spirit by His own free will.

The remarks on this verse by Augustinus of the fourth century are most appropriate. "Not against His will did the Saviour's spirit leave the flesh, but because He would, and when He would, and how He would. Who is there that even can go to sleep when he will, as Jesus did when He would? Who thus puts off his clothes, when he will, as Jesus unclothed Himself when He would? Who goes thus out of doors when he will, as Jesus, when He would, went out of this world?"

"It is finished!" sinners, hear it,
'Tis the dying victor's cry;
"It is finished!" angels, bear it,
Bear the joyful truth on high:
"It is finished!"
Tell it through the earth and sky!

Hear the Lord Himself declaring
All performed He came to do;
Sinners, in yourselves despairing,
This is joyful news to you;
Jesus speaks it,
His are faithful words and true.

"It is finished!" all is over,
Yes, the cup of wrath is drained,
Such the truth these words discover,
Thus the victory was obtained—
'Tis a victory
None but Jesus could have gained."

Verses 31–37. What is meant by "the preparation"? It means the day preceding the Passover Sabbath. It was considered a high day, or, better rendered, a great day. This seems to be conclusive evidence that the death of our Lord took place on Friday. Some in order to get the three days and three nights have tried to fix the day of the death of our Lord on Wednesday, and others on Thursday. The Jewish mode of reckoning explains the apparent difficulty. On account of the approaching great Sabbath they were particular that the law of Moses should not be broken. It is written in Deut. xxi:23 concerning the man who is put to death and is hanged on a tree: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree." The miserable hypocrites had no scruples in murdering an innocent man, but they were scrupulous about letting the dead man hang on the cross over night. They evidently feared that the bodies of the three criminals might hang over the Sabbath on the crosses. They came therefore to Pilate and requested him that their legs might be broken and that all three be taken away. Did they fear anything else? The place of crucifixion was near the wall of the city and near the temple. It was along the highway leading into the city on which hundreds entered the city. Did they fear that the sight of the One in the middle with His bowed, thorn-crowned head, and the inscription above—"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" might arouse a mighty sentiment against them from the many who had followed Him and had been benefited by His works of mercy?

The breaking of the legs of crucified criminals was a Roman custom to hasten death. They did not hesitate to urge the Roman heathen to resort to this barbarous custom and to add additional suffering to the dying men. They evidently did not know that the Lord Jesus had bowed His head and that His body had died. But what would have happened if they had not made the request? As far as we know all three bodies would have remained on the crosses over the Sabbath and the prediction that He would rise again on the third day would have remained unfulfilled. Furthermore, if the Jews had not made the request to break the legs of them, the prediction which is quoted from the Psalms would have had no meaning. The very hatred and malignity of these Jewish leaders, anxious to dispose of the body of the hated One, was instrumental in accomplishing the purpose of God and the fulfillment of His own Word. How true it is, as someone has said, the wickedest enemies of God are only axes, saws and hammers in His hands, and are ignorantly His instruments for doing His work in the world.

Then the soldiers began their ghastly work. Two of them started in with the two thieves and broke their legs, which was probably done with a heavy club of some kind. Then the thief who had turned to the Lord passed away and found the blessed meaning of the promise of the Lord: "To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." The Lord who had delivered up His spirit had gone before him. The other thief, impenitent to the last, also died and passed into the outer darkness.

Then they turned to the cross in the middle. The bowed head, the closed eyes, the limp body, the blanched face, told the story. He had died. There was no need to break His legs. A soldier, at random, pierced His side. There is no ancient source which even gives a hint that such a thing was ever done before. It was not a Roman custom to pierce the side of a dead criminal. The soldier did not follow the command given to him to break the legs of the three to hasten their death; he had no authority to take the spear and pierce His side. Even he was divinely guided in doing this. The Roman government had not authorized the act, but God did, so that the most conclusive evidence of the death of Christ might be given and that Scripture also might be fulfilled.

The blood and water coming from the pierced side was in the first place an evidence that He was dead. The spear pierced the very vitals of the body, the pericardium; if He had not been dead this spear thrust would have accomplished it. So God took care that the lie of rationalism, trying to disprove His physical resurrection by saying, He had not actually died, should have no weight with any sensible being. But it was more than an evidence that Christ had died. The flow of blood and water out of His side is one of the miracles of the cross; it was a supernatural event. From a dead man no blood flows forth; the flow of blood was a special manifestation of God's power. The Apostle John bears witness to it that he saw it with his own eyes. In his first epistle he also alludes to it. "This is He that came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the power of water only, but in the power of water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (Chapter v:6). Very foolishly some expositors have applied this to baptism and the Lord's supper, and others made the strange assertion that wine and water should be mixed at the Lord's table. The blood stands always for atonement, the water for purification, for cleansing. This is the evident meaning of the miracle, to give an outward evidence of the meaning of His sacrificial death—justification and sanctification—typified by blood and water, and both are received by faith in the death of the Son of God.

"Thy love, by man so sorely tried,
Proved stronger than the grave;
The very spear that pierced Thy side
Drew forth the blood to save."

And all was in fulfillment of the Holy Scriptures. How marvelously God took care that nothing should be overlooked in His Word! These wonderful fulfillments of prophecy are one of the outstanding evidences of the supernaturalness of the Book. The soldier could not break the legs of the Lord Jesus, because He is the true Passover Lamb and no bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken (Exod. xii:46). The soldier had to pierce His blessed side not only to give sure evidence of His death and to show miraculously by the blood and water the spiritual results of His death, but to do it because Scripture demands it. It is written in Zechariah xii:10: "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son." But let it be noticed, John avoids the word "*it was fulfilled.*" He did not use this term because the Scripture which predicts this was not fulfilled at that time, nor has it been fulfilled since then. It is true thousands upon thousands have looked to Him and believed on Him, and were saved. It is true

"There is life in a look at the Crucified One,
There is life at this moment for you."

But if we examine the passage in Zechariah we learn that it will be fulfilled in the future, when the repentant remnant of Israel in the last days of this age turns to Him and when He comes again, then they will look upon Him whom they pierced. Thomas, the unbelieving disciple, who would not believe till he put his hand into His side, is a picture of the unbelieving Jew, who always wants to see first and then believe. When He comes the second time this Scripture will be fulfilled and not before.

Verses 38–42. The burial of His blessed body is next brought before us by John's inspired pen. It was a custom to leave crucified criminals unburied. Often they were left hanging on the cross for the vultures to feed upon. His burial had also been predicted by the Spirit of God. Isaiah wrote (correctly translated) "His grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was His tomb" (liii:9). It means this—the Jews would have liked to have His body treated as if it were the body of a wicked man, but God stepped in, and He who had said that "His body should not see corruption," the body which knew no sin, gave His beloved Son for a resting place the tomb of a rich man. Who Joseph of Arimathea was we learn from all four Gospels. He was a wealthy man (Matt. xxvii:51). He was an honorable counsellor who waited for the Kingdom of God (Mark xv:43). He was a good man and just and had not consented to the counsel and deed in condemning the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke xxiii:50). He was a secret disciple of the Lord. While in His life this noble man kept in the background, His death led him out to make a confession by his action. Being an influential man, probably well known to Pilate, he had no difficulty in getting the ready consent of the Roman official. We do not know why he acted so boldly. Many things might be conjectured. He may have been led to confess Him, when His own disciples had forsaken Him, on account of the startling events which took place in connection with the death of the Lord; or it may have been the power of God which enabled him to disregard all danger and ridicule and claim the body of Christ. However, it was an act of faith and confession. A commentator says: "When Christ was working wonders, and speaking as never man spake, all this moved not Joseph to come forth and show himself. But now, Christ being dead and in shame, he comes out. Whereunto do I ascribe this? I ascribe it to the power that comes from the death of Christ. There was never a living man in the world that had such power as that dead body had. More mighty was His death than His life."

It is also a curious incident, perhaps more than that, that it was a "Joseph" who handled probably first the body of our Lord, as an infant, at the time of His birth in Bethlehem, and that it was another "Joseph" who handled the lifeless body for burial.

Nicodemus appears next on the scene. He is even of greater interest than Joseph of Arimathea. We read of him only in this Gospel. He came to the Lord Jesus by night, and heard the great truth concerning the kingdom of God (John iii). The next time he is mentioned is in chapter vii:10. He belonged to those in authority and when they met and were angry at the officers who returned without the hated One, whom they were commissioned to arrest, Nicodemus ventured a weak defense of the Lord. Each time, here and in chapter vii, the Spirit of God adds by way of identification "he that came to Jesus by night," so that there might be no mistake that it was the same person. And now he comes bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about one hundred pound weight. Did he know Joseph of Arimathea? Was Joseph's action the reason that he also came out to confess Christ? Or was it the death of Christ? These questions are unanswerable. But we have always thought that Nicodemus must have been an onlooker when our Lord was crucified. He saw Him nailed to the cross and hanging there. As the teacher of Israel he knew the Scriptures and beheld how Scripture was being fulfilled. Perhaps then the memorable words the Lord had given to him that night came back to him. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Perhaps that very moment he believed and was born again. And now a great Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, the teacher in Israel, comes out boldly to do honor to Him who, in the eyes of the law, had died a criminal. He comes to do honor to the body of the Lord Jesus.

They took the body and wound it in linen cloth with spices, according to the manner of Jewish burial. The fine linen was provided by Joseph (Mark xv:46). This also shows conclusively that the body was dead. Strange it is that some think that the large amount of spices were used to keep back the corruption of the body of our Lord. No spices, no myrrh, no embalming process was needed for that. Corruption is in the world on account of sin. He had no sin, but gave His sinless body; therefore corruption of His body was impossible in fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm xvi.

From verse 41 we learn that in the place where He was crucified was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre which had never been used. As we learn from Matthew, it was hewn out of a rock. An ancient commentator says "It is a striking proof of our Lord's poverty, that while He lived He had no house of His own, and when He died He was buried in another's tomb." The sepulchre was very near and there the blessed, precious body was deposited. There He rested till the dawn of the third day, the first day of the week. "Thus ended the most wonderful funeral the sun ever shone upon. Such a death and such a burial—so little understood by man and so important in the sight of God,—there never was and never can be again. Who need doubt the love of Christ, when we consider the deep humiliation that Christ went through for our sakes! To tabernacle in our flesh at all, to die after the manner of a man, to allow His holy body to hang on a cross, to suffer it to be lifted, handled, carried like a lump of cold clay, and shut up in a dark, silent, solitary tomb,—this was indeed love that passeth knowledge. What true believer need fear the grave now? Solemn as is the thought of our last narrow bed, we must never forget that it is the place where the Lord lay. 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. xv:56)."*

Matthew Henry says "Christ's death should comfort us against the fear of death. The grave could not long keep Christ, and it shall not long keep us. It was a loathsome prison before, it is a perfumed bed now. He whose Head is in Heaven, need not fear to put his feet in a grave."

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*Expositoy Thoughts on John.

CHAPTER XX

If the Gospel of John ended with the previous chapter, with the account of the burial of the Crucified One, we would have no Gospel of salvation at all, no assurance and no hope. That most subtle and dangerous infidelity, which is known as "Modernism," denies the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It leaves Him in the grave. The tomb was never opened and the body of our holy Lord became the prey of corruption. According to Modernism, He did not rise from the dead, nor did He ascend into heaven, nor is He in heaven as the glorified Man, nor is He ever coming again. Yet this monstrosity claims the name of "Christianity"! The two great pillars upon which Christianity rests are the Virgin birth, and the physical resurrection of Christ after He had expired on the cross, as the substitute of sinners, and was buried. If either one of these pillars is demolished the whole Gospel scheme collapses. It has pleased the Spirit of God to give us His logic on this point. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians there is a divine definition of the Gospel, by which sinners are saved. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Then after marshalling the mighty witnesses of His physical resurrection, we find that magnificent argument as to the immense importance of His bodily resurrection. If Christ be not risen—then what? "And if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." There is nothing left to preach about, and any faith in Christ is a vain and a foolish thing. "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." Cephas and the twelve, the five hundred brethren, James and all the Apostles, as well as the women who claimed to have seen Him, conversed with Him, seen Him alive, in whose presence He ate, were all miserable deceivers, and bore a false witness, when they said He was risen from the dead, if He had never left the grave. And the Apostle Paul also was a false witness, when he declared he had seen Him in the glory light on the road to Damascus.

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain; ye are yet in your sins." For a dead Christ has no power to save. If His body was never raised from the dead, His death and His precious blood has no more power to do anything for man than the death of any other human being. "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." They died trusting in a false hope of resurrection; if He was not raised then nobody will be raised from the dead. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." For one who hopes in Christ, suffers on account of his faith, has hardship, denies himself, is most miserable inasmuch as he hopes in one who is dead, who cannot do anything for him. Such is the divine logic, showing the great importance of the physical resurrection of Him who died on the cross.

Therefore His bodily resurrection is an event upon which the whole redemption plan rests; it is one of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. The evidences of His literal and physical resurrection are of such a nature that they are conclusive. It rests on fuller evidence and surer and better grounds than any event in history.

He was seen eleven times after His death and burial, and appeared at different times of the day, to different persons in different ways. He was seen by women and by men, at the sea-shore, in rooms when doors were closed, on a country road and on a mountain. At one time five hundred saw Him. It is impossible that so large a number of brethren could be self-deceived, or concocted a falsehood. And those who saw Him, to whom He appeared, talked with Him, walked with Him, sat at the table with Him, they saw Him eat and touched His body. It must also be remembered that many of these witnesses were reluctant to believe the report, that He was alive. Thomas would only accept the report of His resurrection by seeing Him, and putting his hand into His side. And the little band of His followers, who had nearly all deserted Him, who were cowards in spirit, a short time after became courageous witnesses to the fact of His resurrection. All apostolic preaching centers in the resurrection of Christ. Peter in his inspired testimony on the day of Pentecost preached the fact of His resurrection, and ever after, as well as the other witnesses, including the Apostle Paul. Something happened or they could not have given such a bold and unflinching testimony; even the rationalist, Strauss, who, like the present day Modernist, denied the resurrection, said "something extraordinary must have occurred."

The destructive critics, as they are now generally called, Modernists, like other infidels have charged the divine records concerning the resurrection of our Lord with being contradictory. They claim that there are discrepancies which cannot be reconciled. While there are difficulties they are not contradictions, such as the Modernist claims them to be. Furthermore, the different accounts can be satisfactorily harmonized. Instead of being the marks of errors, or deception, these different records bear witness to their genuineness and trustworthiness.

Verses 1-10. The first day of the week was soon to dawn. It was early and still dark, though the sun was about to rise (Mark xvi:2) when Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre. Here we face the first difficulty. Was she alone or did other women accompany her? Mark in his record says that the first appearance of our risen Lord was to Mary Magdalene (Mark xvi:9), but he does not describe the manner of that appearance. The Apostle John tells us how He appeared to her (verses 11-13). According to John she came alone to the sepulchre; but Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us that other women were in her company. There can be no question that Mary Magdalene was not alone when she went to the sepulchre. It would have been unnatural, not woman-like, for her to venture out alone when it was still night, especially in view of the fact that a large number of strangers were encamped outside of the walls of Jerusalem, on account of the Passover feast. There is a hint that others were with her in the second verse. When she met Simon Peter and the other disciples she said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and **we** know not where they have laid Him." Had she been alone she would have said, "I know not where they laid Him"; but she said "we know not" evidently speaking for the other women who were with her. The Holy Spirit makes her prominent in this account as given by John, because his inspired pen was to give the details of the first appearance of the risen Christ. He singled her out, out of whom He had cast seven demons (Mark xvi:9), to be the first witness of His triumphant resurrection. The loving gratitude she felt for Him prompted her to be probably the leader of the company of women, who went out so very early to the sepulchre.

When Mary Magdalene and her companions arrived at the sepulchre, they found the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Mary Magdalene observed this before the others noticed it. Perhaps in her eagerness to get to the sepulchre she walked faster than the other women and therefore noticed first that the stone was rolled away. The resurrection had already taken place. No human eye had witnessed the great act when God raised Him from the dead, as no created eye had witnessed the mystery of His sufferings on the cross, when darkness for three hours enshrouded the divine sufferer.

Matthew tells us that there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. And for fear of him the Roman soldiers trembled and became as dead. But before the stone had been rolled away He had arisen. Mary Magdalene and her companions came after all this had transpired. They probably knew nothing of the guard which had been placed before the sepulchre, or they would not have gone so early to the place. The soldiers had fled. None of the women saw anything of them. And Mary Magdalene, the moment she saw that the stone was taken away ran off, without a further investigation of the empty tomb. She ran to tell Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, which is John. Where she met them we do not know, but it may be surmised that their dwelling place was not at a very great distance from the garden where He had been buried. And while she ran the rest of the women drew nearer to the sepulchre. Peter and John evidently dwelt together, and let us not forget, that Mary, the mother of Jesus was there also. How fast the feet of loving, grateful Mary Magdalene must have run to convey the good news, that the stone was rolled away, to the two disciples and to the mother of the Lord! And yet she did not know the full truth. She was still ignorant of the good tidings "He is risen." All she knew was "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." She did not even imagine that He was alive, but thought somebody had taken the lifeless body of her Lord and put Him somewhere. Then there was some more running. Both Peter and John ran a race to reach the garden where the sepulchre was as quickly as possible. John beat Peter in this race and came first to the sepulchre. How often Peter and John are seen together. They were fishermen together. They were present with James on the

Mount of Transfiguration, at the house of Jairus and in Gethsemane. John was a witness of Peter's shameful denial also. Perhaps during the two nights after Peter's denial there was but little sleep for either one. Peter was overcome with grief and we suppose loving John tried to comfort him and cheer his heart, when suddenly Mary appeared, with her astonishing news. No wonder that both ran as quickly as they could. What thoughts of wonder and amazement must have filled their minds as they ran thus together!

While John reached the place first, because he was the younger, and saw the linen burial clothes lying, he did not enter in. Peter, who followed him closely, went into the sepulchre, saw the linen clothes "and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." Then John also went in and saw and believed.

Here, then, was a conclusive and perfect proof that the body of the Lord had not been hastily removed by thieves, whether friends or foes. Like one who had slept, and who disposes in an orderly way of his garments, the Lord in arising from the sleep of death, had folded the linen clothes and the napkin. There was no haste displayed, but all had been done calmly and deliberately. When Lazarus came forth from his grave, at the command of the Lord, the grave clothes were about him, and they had to loose him. Not so with the Lord. He needed no one to loosen the bands and the napkin. He did it Himself.

"The linen clothes lying were a sign of the resurrection. For neither if any person had removed the body, would they, before doing so, have stripped it; nor if any had stolen it, would they have taken the trouble to remove the napkin, and roll it up and lay it in a place by itself. They would have taken the body as it was. On this account, John tells us, by anticipation, that the body was buried with much myrrh, which glues linen to the body not less firmly than lead, in order that when thou hearest that the napkin lay apart, thou mayest not endure those who say the body was stolen. A thief would not have been so foolish as to spend so much time on superfluous matter. Why should he undo the clothes? How could he have escaped detection if he had done so? But why did the clothes lie apart while the napkin was wrapped together by itself? That thou mayest know that it was not the action of men in confusion or in haste."*

It seems up to this moment neither John nor Peter had understood the meaning of the Scriptures, that Christ should rise after His passion, nor His own words in which He had predicted this momentous event. But now they saw and believed, though the full meaning, as revealed in the Scriptures, was not known to them, just as Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emaus were ignorant of it. Peter and John returned to their dwelling.

Verses 11–18. Peter and John had returned to their own home, probably to eat their breakfast. It shows a strange indifference, the result of not knowing the Scriptures. The sight of the empty tomb had convinced them that the body was not there. If they had known the Scriptures they would have remained, constrained by love and hope, to see Him who was risen from the dead. It was different with Mary. She remained at the sepulchre. She had not entered, as Peter had done. Standing without she wept. She too was ignorant of the Word of God concerning His resurrection. But what she lacked in knowledge was made up by her deep love for Him who had delivered her, by His divine power, from the dominion of demons. She tarried at the hallowed spot, with tears streaming down her face, hoping that in some way her question, where they had put the body of the Lord, might be answered. An old commentator says: "The going away of Peter and John commends Mary's staying behind. To the grave she came before them, from the grave she went telling them, to the grave she returned with them, at the grave she remained behind them."

Then weeping still she stooped down, and ventured a look into the sepulchre. She had not done this before. When she saw the stone taken away, and the Roman soldiers gone, she surmised that the grave was empty. Then Peter and John had convinced themselves that the body was gone. Mary now wanted to see with her own eyes, and as she looked into the sepulchre, she saw what the two disciples had not seen. She beheld two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. There can be no question that they had been there when Peter and John had examined the sepulchre, but they were invisible to them, while they became visible to Mary. Modernists use this fact as an alleged evidence of the untrustworthiness of this record. They claim here is an irreconcilable contradiction. Like the Sadducees, Modernists do not believe in angels. If they believed in these supernatural beings, of whom the Bible has so much to say, they would also believe the record. The Angels of God appear and disappear, become visible and invisible, instantaneously and supernaturally, according to God's command. Elisha saw the heavenly hosts, while his servant did not see them; but in answer to the prophet's prayer the servant beheld them likewise.

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*Chrysostom.

Were these angels sent in connection with His triumphant resurrection, or were they present at the moment when the lifeless body of our Lord was deposited in the sepulchre? While Scripture does not answer this question, we believe they were sent by God the moment the body was laid in the grave to keep guard over His holy body, as it is written in the ninety-first psalm "He shall give His angels charge over Thee."

And Mary was not startled by beholding these tenants of the heavens. There is no outcry of fear, no alarm, as is generally the case when angels suddenly appear. Her heart was so fully occupied with the Lord, and the absence of His holy body, that she was delivered from all fear. And we too, if our Lord is the absorbing object of our heart, shall fear nothing.

The angels then spoke to her. "Woman, why weepest thou?" What tender sympathy this question reveals! They knew, of course, why she wept. Here is an evidence that the holy angels of God enter with sympathy into human affairs, the sorrows of His people, as they also rejoice when a sinner repents, and are the unseen witnesses of Christian worship.* But the question carried with it assurance, which weeping Mary was not able to grasp. **Why** weepest thou? Was there any reason for this prolonged lamentation? Their presence should have convinced her that all was well. With such a guard no enemy would have taken away His blessed body. Why weepest thou? There is no place for tears here. Instead of weeping eyes there should have been lips of holy laughter, shouts of joy and shouts of praise. But she knew not this. She answered the angelic question. She takes it for granted that the angels knew whom she meant and of whom she spoke as "my Lord." Yet not the faintest thought that He might be risen and alive enters her mind. As another says: "All was in error; tears of grief,—but false grief, imagining that to be which was not, and Him to be dead, who was alive. She weeps, because she finds the grave empty, which, God forbid, she should have found full, for the Christ must have been dead still, and there would be no resurrection. And this case of Mary Magdalene is our case oftentimes. It is the error of our conceit to weep when we have no cause, and to joy when we have as little. False joys and false sorrows, false hopes and false fears, this life of ours is full of them."

And now suddenly something happens. The all-important statement, which burdened her heart, had been made to the heavenly visitors and watchers in the tomb. Naturally she expected an answer. Her eyes must have eagerly watched the faces and the lips of the angels. Instead, when she had said this, she turned backward. She turned around and away from the angels. What produced this changed attitude? Something must have occurred which made her turn away so abruptly from the empty tomb, without waiting for an answer from the angels. She may have heard approaching footsteps; or she may have felt instinctively that some one stood behind her. Perhaps the angels were responsible for directing her attention away from themselves to the person which had appeared. They knew the Lord. They may have arisen in holy awe and worship, and riveting their eye upon Him, Mary too turned around to see who the Person was.

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* Our volume, "The Angels of God," covers this interesting truth more fully.

She sees Him, but does not know that it is Jesus. Not her tear-dimmed eyes prevented her recognition of the Lord, whom she knew so well, but, as it was with the two on the road to Emmaus, her eyes were supernaturally holden. And perhaps the element of glory which enshrouded now the risen body of His humiliation also contributed to the failure to know that it was Jesus. And now He speaks. "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Just as the angels knew, why she was weeping, so He knew all about her tears and whom she was seeking. Like the angels, He questioned her thus to show His loving sympathy, only His is greater than the sympathy of angels. Whom seekest thou? was a searching question. She had believed on Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. She had witnessed His miracles. She herself had been miraculously delivered by Him and His Word of power. Art thou seeking such a One, who came to seek and save you? Seeking Him among the dead who is the Prince of life, the Lord of glory! The question has in it a gentle rebuke to her anxious weeping.

And Mary thought she was speaking to the gardener. She comes with the same burden she had stated twice before. "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." She manifests again her fullest occupation with Him only. She takes it for granted that the gardener must know whom she means; and though the person before her appears as a stranger, she is not a bit more alarmed, than when she faced the angels. And in her impulsive, passionate speaking, she declared her willingness to take His body away, if she only could discover where the body is. Then He speaks. "Mary!" This one word was enough to open her eyes. She turned again, probably to fall at His feet, and cried out "Rabboni." What joy must have filled her heart at the great discovery, that He who died is risen from among the dead and stood now before her in His resurrection glory. She had sown in tears and reaps now in joy. "It was the Good Shepherd calling His own sheep by name. She was the same to Him as ever.

He stood in resurrection power; but His love was the same to her, certainly not less than when He had cast seven demons out of her. Doubtless there was a sameness in the expression of her name, which went straight home to her heart, and recalled her from her dream about His person, once dead, but now in truth alive forever more."

We see her at His feet, and then He spoke: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and to your God." From this we surmise that she was about to lay hold of His feet and cover them now with her tears of joy and gratitude. If we turn to Matthew xxviii:9 we read that the women "came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him." Needless to say that this also has been pointed out as a discrepancy. It is not, but a mark of the divine authorship of the Gospel records.

Conservative exegetes have tried to explain the Lord's words to Mary in different ways. Some have thought that our Lord knew that she might have been carried too far in her loving demonstration, under momentary excitement, and that the Lord forbade her to touch Him, to repress these feelings. We do not think this explanation is worthy of consideration.

The better explanation is on the dispensational aspect of the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of John.

In spite of much scribbling against the teaching that the Gospel of Matthew is the Kingdom Gospel, with a striking dispensational aspect and message, all painstaking students of this Gospel maintain this still and find in it the great wisdom of inspiration. We see in this first Gospel the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of David, coming to His own as the promised King. He preached the Kingdom and that was rejected. Then He died and rose from among the dead. One characteristic feature of the Gospel of Matthew is that nothing is said of the ascension. If we had only the Gospel of Matthew we would have to believe that the risen Christ never left the earth, but is still here in person. The evident purpose of this is to show that the Son of David will some day be the King on earth, as it is so abundantly predicted in the prophetic Word. At the close of the Gospel of Matthew the Lord is seen resuming His relation with the Jewish remnant. The women who held Him by the feet and worshipped Him represented typically that remnant, who will, after His return, enjoy His kingly presence on earth.

But this is not the viewpoint in the Gospel of John. Here we are outside the kingdom aspect; a new order of things is to be introduced and a new relationship is to be established. As the risen Christ He ascended on high to take His place at the right hand of God. He is now to be regarded not in His bodily presence here on earth, but as the object of faith, received up in glory. To exemplify this the Lord Jesus Christ told Mary not to touch Him, for He was not yet ascended to His Father. After His ascension believers are brought into a spiritual union with Him, and know Him no longer after the flesh, but know Him as glorified in heaven; and through Him know His Father, as their Father, and His God, as their God. The command to Mary "Touch Me not" has therefore an interesting and deep symbolical meaning. The earthly relationship with the Jews ceases and a new relationship, the heavenly, is to be introduced. In the earthly relationship with the Jewish remnant, resumed at our Lord's return, He will be bodily present in the kingdom; but in the heavenly relationship He is bodily absent and believers are in a heavenly union with the risen Christ. Chrysostom's comment is helpful and interesting.

"Methinks Mary wished still to converse with Jesus as before, and in her joy perceived nothing great in Him, although He had become far more excellent in the flesh. To lead her therefore from this idea, and that she might speak to Him with awe (for neither with the disciples doth He henceforth appear so familiar as before), He raiseth her thoughts, that she should give more reverent heed to Him. To have said, 'Approach Me not as you did before, for matters are not in the same state; nor shall I henceforth be with you in the same way,' would have been harsh and high-sounding. But the saying, 'I am not yet ascended to my Father,' though not painful to hear, was the same thing. For by saying, 'I am not yet ascended,' He showeth that He hasteth and passeth thither, and that it was not meet that one about to depart thither, and no longer to converse with men, should be looked on with the same feelings as before."

Then He sent her with a message, "Go tell my brethren." It is the message of this new relationship. It had been indicated by Him at the close of Matthew xii, when Israel had rejected the kingdom message (Matthew xii:50). In the twenty-second Psalm, after the suffering is over, we read, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren." This relationship is brought about by His death, His resurrection and His ascension. As His brethren believers are put through grace into the same place as Himself. And how glad Mary Magdalene must have been for the commission! And what a messenger of good tidings she must have made!

Verses 19-23. The great day, which we might well call one of the most eventful in human history, had a wonderful ending. He had appeared four times in His risen glory. First Mary Magdalene had seen Him; then the women as they returned from the grave met Him (Matt. xxviii:9); then He appeared to Peter and also to the two who were on the road to Emmaus.

And now the evening of this first Lord's Day (Rev. i:10) had come. The disciples had gathered together in a room, perhaps the same room where He had instituted the memorial feast, which we call the Lord's Supper, and where He had uttered His last words to them, and prayed His great prayer. It is hard to imagine in what state of mind they were. They were reluctant to believe the good news of the empty tomb. Their hope had died, when He had been nailed to the cross, and when He had been buried. And when finally they believed, it was like being begotten anew, as Peter expresses it, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. i:3).

The doors were tightly closed for fear of the Jews. Their fears were not unfounded, for the report had been circulated on the self-same day, by the lies and the bribery of the Jewish elders, that the disciples had stolen the body while the Roman guard slept (Matt. xxviii:13). They feared arrest.

But that arrest on the false charge that they were thieves never came. The soldiers did not dare press the false charge, for if they did they took their lives into their hands; it was a crime for a guard to sleep, punishable by death.

Suddenly, with the doors securely fastened, He came and stood in their midst. Did the doors open by themselves in a miraculous way, or did they remain closed, and He enter in through the closed doors? We know when Peter was delivered out of prison by the ministry of an angel, the doors were caused to open by supernatural power; it was a miracle. The same had happened before (Acts v and xii). But here no such miracle took place, but we have a startling manifestation of the power of the risen body of our Lord. The doors needed not to be unbolted to let Him in. The text makes it clear that the doors remained closed, especially when He appeared again, "the doors being shut, He stood in the midst." The risen body of our Lord was not bound or controlled by the laws which bind and control the natural body of man. He could enter in, without an angel coming and opening the doors for Him. The risen body is a miracle in itself. That body is supernatural. While it was a real human body, a material body, a body which could be touched and handled, which had bones and flesh, yet it was a spiritual body, endowed with powers which are above our understanding. In that body He appeared and disappeared, was visible and invisible, entered through a closed door and departed through a closed door, and it could finally be lifted up, no law of gravitation putting a check upon it, and carried in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, through the heavens into heaven itself. The resurrection body is a great mystery and will remain a mystery till we look no longer into a glass darkly. When that blessed day comes, we shall have the redemption of our body, and that future body, in which we shall spend eternity, will be like unto His own glorious body (Phil. iii:21). Then we shall know. Then we shall live as He lives, in a resurrection body of glory.

Modernism ridicules such a faith. They talk of philosophical and scientific impossibilities, which is so "high sounding." We believe the Word of God, what God has been pleased to reveal. True faith bows in humility acknowledging on the one hand the limitation of the finite mind, and on the other, an omnipotent God who can do all things. Modernism is the pride of the natural man gone to seed, and unbelief in the power of God.

"Peace be unto you" was the first word He uttered in the presence of the disciples. This is still the greeting among orthodox Jews, as it was the mode of salutation among the Jewish people in those days He walked on earth. But it is more than the formal, every-day greeting. One of the last words He had uttered before the cross was that word "Peace" (xvi:33). The first word He speaks here is the same. And what had happened? He had died the sacrificial death as the Lamb of God. Peace was made in the blood of the Cross. The great work had been finished. What had happened? Peter had denied His Lord; they all had forsaken Him, had acted like cowards; they had been unbelieving. But as He appears no word of reproof or accusation came from His lips. Instead of reminding them of their shameful failure, He said, "Peace be unto you." His greeting told them that all was forgiven and forgotten; that there was nothing between Him and them. What cheer it must have brought to their accusing consciences, and what comfort to their hearts!

But was He really "the same Jesus"? Was He the One who hung on the cross, or was it some kind of an apparition, a ghost or an illusion? It is all settled by Himself. "He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." It seems up to the moment He showed them His hands and His side, they were not quite convinced that it was really their risen Lord. But now as they beheld the pierced hands, which a short time before had been nailed to the cross, and when they beheld the place where the spear had pierced His blessed side all doubts vanished, joy and gladness filled their hearts. One look at the marks of His passion was sufficient to give them assuring joy. There faith looks still, realizing that peace with God is not what we have done, but what He has done. But what will be our joy when we see Him as He is in His second coming! It is strange that John Calvin should have taught that the nail-prints, and the spear wound, were only seen for a short time, till the Apostles were fully convinced; afterwards they disappeared. These marks of His passion and love are still seen in heaven, in His glorified body. Revelation v:6 tells us so. All the redeemed in glory shall see them, and when He comes to earth again the pierced hands, feet and side will be the marks of identification for the Jew. (See Chapter xix:37.)

Once more He said "Peace be unto you." This second announcement of peace must be linked with the commission He gives to them. They are to carry the Gospel of peace to others, peace to him that is far off (the Gentile) and to him that is near (the Jew) (Isaiah lvii:19). He was the sent One of the Father, and so they, and all believers after them, are sent forth by the Lord. He was the representative of the Father, and we are His representatives. What an honor and dignity! And what responsibility also! How little God's children think of all this. We are no longer of the world, but He has sent us to it to bear witness of Him and of His peace. What He had prayed before the cross (xvii:18), He now does.

Then follows a significant act. "He breathed into them and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." The term "breathed into" (them, is not in the Greek) is mentioned only here in the New Testament. The Greek word used is the same with which the translators of the Septuagint translate Gen. ii:7, when the Lord breathed into man the breath of life. This gives the real, symbolical meaning of this action of our Lord. In creation the same Lord, who is now in the midst of His own, in resurrection glory, had breathed into Adam the breath of life. Here by this breathing He indicates the communication of another life. The One by whom and for whom all things were created, in whose image the first man was created, and into whom He breathed, as quoted above, became Man Himself. He is the last Adam. He is now, after His work as the other Adam had been accomplished, the communicator, the giver of a better life, of eternal life. "The last Adam is made a quickening Spirit" (1 Cor. xv:45). He is the beginning of the new creation, as the first Adam was the beginning of the old creation. The inbreathing therefore stands for the communication of eternal life, which He bestows upon those who believe on Him. But those disciples were already in possession of eternal life, for they had believed on Him. It could therefore not mean that He gave them the life, which they already had. For this reason we say, it is a symbolical action. He manifests Himself now openly, as risen from the dead, as the Last Adam.

But what does it mean when He said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit"? Many explanations have been given. Some think He revived by it the life which they already had; others say that He bestowed energy to wait patiently for the coming of the Holy Spirit, or that they became filled with better knowledge and understanding. That it was not the coming of the Paraclete, the other comforter He had promised, is obvious. The third person of the Trinity did not come till the Lord Jesus was glorified, and that glorification demanded His return to the Father. The Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost, and not here in the upper room on the first Lord's day. In saying these words He shows that He is not only the communicator of life, but also the giver of the Spirit; the Holy Spirit not only proceeds from the Father, but from the Son as well. He showed beforehand by these words they would receive the Holy Spirit personally, as the power and energy of His own risen life in them. The reception of the Spirit was accomplished on Pentecost.

The final words, spoken by Him at this occasion, have often puzzled Christians, mostly on account of the claims made by an unscriptural priesthood in the professing church. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto the whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

We state briefly some of the leading interpretations of this verse. (1) Some explain that the Lord gave power to the Apostles to absolve men from sin, and also to retain sin. But this power was purely personal power, belonging only to the Apostolic Age, ceasing with the sign gifts, such as the gift of tongues and the gift of healing. (2) The Romish view is that the Apostles received this power of infallibly absolving and anathematizing, and that this same power was conferred by the Apostles to their successors, thus constituting a self-perpetuating hierarchy. It is found in a modified form in different ritualistic denominations of Protestantism. It is an unscriptural view from start to finish. There is no hint anywhere in Scripture that the Apostles appointed successors and therefore apostolic succession is an invention. (3) A third view is that the power promised and authority given is in connection with the preaching of the Gospel, announcing on what terms sins would be forgiven, and if these terms are not accepted sins would be retained. (4) Still another view is that the Lord gives in these words a warning as well as a promise. Some teach that Christians remit sins when, by their influence, their testimony and their example, they induce sinners to repent and accept Christ; that they retain sins when, by their negligence, they keep sinners back from accepting Christ. This is a far-fetched interpretation. But there are other views.

The power to forgive sins is God's prerogative. The Jews said when the Lord Jesus told the paralytic, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee," "Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" (Luke v:21). They were right. If the Lord Jesus Christ is not God then He uttered a blasphemy. And so it is a blasphemy for man to claim power to forgive the sins of another man. This is what Romanism teaches by claiming the power to absolve sinners, and also to shut heaven against persons not absolved. It is a monstrous teaching.

But what did our Lord mean when He spoke these words?

He conferred upon them undoubtedly the power of declaring through the preaching of the Gospel, in the power of the Holy Spirit, whose sins are forgiven, and whose sins are not forgiven. Their preaching in the Book of Acts gives us examples of this declaration. Peter said in the house of Cornelius, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." When Paul preached the Gospel in Antioch of Pisidia, he said, "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," and later he said to the jailor in the Macedonian city, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." They declared that those who believe have their sins remitted, and, naturally, those who do not believe their sins are retained.

But this is not all. As a result of the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost the assembly, that is, the Church, was formed. The assembly, the gathering of those who have believed and are saved, has power and authority in discipline. Those who believe are accepted into fellowship, their sins are remitted. The wicked person, of whom we read in the Corinthian assembly, was ordered to be put away by the assembly, but after his repentance, his self-judgment and deep sorrow, was received back. And Paul wrote, "To whom ye (the assembly) forgive anything, I also; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything (it is) for your sakes in the person of Christ" (2 Cor. ii:10). Thus the assembly by receiving, pronounce the remission of sins, and by putting away out of fellowship, the retaining of sins.

Verses 24-31. The final portion of this chapter brings before us a second manifestation of the risen Christ, probably in the same place, a week after the first manifestation. Thomas, one of the twelve, who was called Didymus, had been absent at the first appearance of Christ. Why he had not gathered with the others is not stated. Twice before we have met his name in this Gospel, and apart from these passages we know nothing else. He has been called a rationalist with a warm heart. His devotion to the Lord we have pointed out before. (See Chapter xi:1-4.)

When the other disciples gave to him the blessed information "We have seen the Lord," he refused to believe what these reliable witnesses told him. They were his friends and his fellow disciples. What could be their motive in telling him an untruth? His absence from the gathering and his unbelief in the Lord's resurrection may have been permitted by the Lord, so as to furnish one of the most conclusive evidences of His physical resurrection. And so he declared in the presence of the ten trustworthy witnesses, emphatically and passionately, that he would not believe that the crucified One is alive, unless he himself would see and touch His body.

But what must have been the state of mind of the doubting disciple during the week which followed? While his companions enjoyed the blessed assurance that their Lord and Master is alive, and were filled with great joy and peace, Thomas was in darkness, and must have wandered about with a heavy heart, produced by the uncertainty which laid heavy upon him.

After eight days had passed all was changed. "And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace unto you." A full week had gone by. The memorable day, the first day of the week, on which He arose from among the dead, found them again gathered in the place "within" where they had been the week before. There can be no question that this is the beginning of the keeping of the first day of the week, as the day of rest and worship. From the earliest times the day after the Jewish Sabbath was called "The Lord's Day" (Rev. i:10*).

What led Thomas to be present at that time we can only surmise. Perhaps it was his uncertainty, the thought that the disciples were truthful in their witness, which induced him to seek their fellowship at this occasion. Perhaps during the week the Spirit of God may have brought to his remembrance some of the words which the Lord had spoken about His death and resurrection on the third day.

Then suddenly the same happened which happened a week before. The doors were shut as they were at the first visit. All at once He stood in the midst. And as it was before, He utters His blessed "Peace unto you."

From the words which follow it is evident that this second appearing of the risen Christ was exclusively for the sake of Thomas. Thomas had been unbelieving, yet the Lord in His great kindness, knowing his whole story, does not rebuke him directly for his unbelief, though the words addressed to the unbelieving disciple contain a gracious and loving reminder of his weakness and failure. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." In speaking these words to Thomas, He showed that He had heard every word which Thomas had spoken when first told by the disciples that the Lord had appeared unto them. The words He spoke to him reveal His great condescension.

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*Not "The Day of the Lord" as Bullingerism teaches. This strained exposition, besides other errors of the late Dr. B., are now being taught by certain Bible teachers.

"To come into the world at all, and take on the human body, then to allow that body to be scourged, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, and laid in a grave—all this, beyond doubt, was astonishing condescension. But when the victory over sin and death was won, and He had taken on Him His resurrection body, to come to a doubting, sceptical disciple, and bid him touch Him, put his finger into the nail prints on His hands, and put his hand into His side—all this was condescension which we can never sufficiently admire and adore." Thus He treated in marvelous kindness a disciple, who believed in Him, yet was weak in faith. And in this He has left us also an example, how to deal with brethren who are weak in faith. But it is a different matter with the outspoken rationalist, who does not believe, not because he cannot, but because he will not.

But did Thomas do what the Lord bade him to do? Did he put his hand into His side, or did his fingers touch the nail prints in His hands? It seems that he did not. He is taken completely by surprise and bursts out in one great ejaculatory sentence, "My Lord and My God." These five words contain the expressions of astonishment, delight, repentance, grief, faith, confession and adoration. This confession of Thomas, that Christ is God, is the last witness to His Deity in this Gospel. We remind the reader that the first testimony to the Deity of Christ in this Gospel was uttered by Nathanael. The dispensational-prophetic meaning we shall point out directly.

Thomas had seen and therefore believed. Unitarians have twisted this testimony in such a way so as to suit their denials of the Godhead of our Lord. The late Dr. Lyman Abbott in his commentary on this Gospel, written when he believed in the Deity of Christ, which was over fifty years ago, made the following remarks on the Unitarian attempts to break the forceful meaning of the believing outburst of Thomas: "To interpret this utterance as a mere expletory outcry is the shallowest of criticism. It reduces a sublime and exalted confession of faith to an irrelevant and semi-profane exclamation. It is grammatically, psychologically, and spiritually untenable; grammatically, because it is expressly said that Thomas addressed the words directly to Jesus; psychologically, because it is equally irrational to suppose that Thomas, just convinced of the resurrection of his Lord, should break out into a meaningless exclamation, or that John should have reported it if it had been uttered; spiritually, because Christ on the strength of this confession of Thomas recognizes his faith."

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." These were His words to adoring Thomas. Here we must consider, in explanation of these words, the dispensational aspect of the occurrence. Thomas is a type of the Jews, not the grossly materialistic portion, so prominent in our days, who have cast off every bit of the faith of their fathers, but of that remnant which is coming to the foreground during the last years of the present age. Like Thomas, they are still unbelieving; they know Him not who is risen from among the dead and who is the King of Israel. They, too, like Thomas, want to see first, before believing. It is constitutional with the Jew that he asks for a sign, and does not want to believe till he sees. As it was with Thomas, the Lord appeared the *second* time, so will He appear the second time unto them that look for Him (this expecting Jewish remnant) unto salvation. When He comes again, He will, as it was with Thomas, display the nail prints in His hands and feet and His pierced side, so that it might be fulfilled "They shall look upon Me whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for Him," for they learn then that He was wounded in the house of His friends, wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities. And, like Thomas, they will cry out "My Lord and My God." Thus they will confess Him, when He comes for their final deliverance, their restoration and spiritual blessing.

"Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is Jehovah, we have waited for Him, we will be glad, and rejoice in His salvation" (Is. xxv:9).

When our Lord said "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," He did not mean the Old Testament Saints, but He meant the believers from among the Gentiles, gathered into the Body of Christ during this age. This is the age of faith and not of sight. We, who love Him, though we have never seen Him, and rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory, have a greater blessedness, than the Jew who will see Him in the day of His visible coming, and then believe.

Bishop Ryle remarks on the sentence "Blessed are they who believe, and yet have not seen": "The principle contained in the sentence before us, is one of vast importance in every age, and specially in our own. In a day of scepticism, free inquiry and rationalism, so-called, when hundreds are continually railing against creeds, and dogmatism, the sentence deserves close attention and consideration. Nothing is more common now-a-days than to hear people say that they 'decline to believe things above their reason, that they cannot believe what they cannot entirely understand in religion, that they must see everything clearly before they can believe.' Such talk as this sounds very fine, and is very taking with young persons and superficially educated people, because it supplies a convenient reason for neglecting vital religion altogether. But it is a style of talking which shows a mind either proud, or foolish, or inconsistent."

We must point out in conclusion the correspondence of Thomas with Nathanael, in the first chapter of this Gospel. The reader remembers that the day in which the Lord Jesus received His first disciples, who followed Him and spent the night with Him, is typical of this age in which He gathers His Church. To this corresponds the first appearing of the risen Christ, recorded in the present chapter. Then in the first chapter, on the day following, the second day, Philip is called and Nathanael, doubting first, is convinced of the Deity and Messiahship of the Lord. We pointed out the same lesson we have found here in the case of Thomas; both represent the future remnant of Israel.

The writer of the Gospel, the beloved disciple, speaks of many other things which Jesus did, but which are unrecorded in this Gospel. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he had written what this Gospel contains, to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His Name. And this is the double purpose of this blessed fourth Gospel, as we have learned in our exposition chapter after chapter.

CHAPTER XXI

Certain critics have treated this last chapter of John with suspicion. Grotius among the more modern commentators stated what Tertullian many centuries before had advocated, that the Gospel of John ends with the twentieth chapter, and that the concluding chapter was written by another hand. The notion that chapter xxi is at best a kind of an appendix is held by many among them Alford, Stier, Neander, Tholuk, Westcott, and a score of others. The contents of the chapter prove conclusively that it was written by John and forms an important part of the Gospel, therefore it is not an appendix at all.

"From all these theories I entirely dissent, and repudiate them altogether. I see no proof whatever that the two last verses of the twentieth chapter were intended to be a winding up of the whole Gospel. To me they appear to be a characteristic comment of the Evangelist, such as he often makes, on the account he has given in the chapter of our Lord's appearances to the disciples after his resurrection, and nothing more. To me it appears perfectly natural that he should go on writing, and give a further account of our Lord's most instructive appearance at the sea of Galilee; and I see in the narrative no abruptness or awkward fitting whatever. On the contrary, I see a peculiar beauty in the selection of the matter which the twenty-first chapter contains. It seems to me a most fitting conclusion to the whole narrative of the Gospel, to tell us our Lord's last sayings about two such Apostles as Peter and John.—Concerning Peter, it should be remembered that none of the Apostles had professed so much, and yet fallen so sadly as he had. John takes care to tell us how graciously and emphatically Jesus restores him to his commission, and specially bids him feed His Church, and foretells his end.—Concerning John, it should be remembered that he had been peculiarly mentioned, as the disciple whom Jesus loved. He meekly tells us that the only prediction about himself, if it can be called one, was that his future end was left in obscurity by his Lord. And thus he concludes his Gospel. If any one thinks that such a chapter comes in awkwardly, and is not a fitting conclusion to John's narrative after the twentieth chapter, I cannot agree with him"—J. C. Ryle.

Verses 1-3. The chapter is at once defined as containing another manifestation of the risen Christ. It is clearly marked as the third time that He showed Himself to His disciples (verse 14). There are then two previous manifestations. The first one when Thomas was absent, taking place on the resurrection day; the second one a week later, recorded at the close of the preceding chapter. The prophetic-dispensational meaning of these two manifestations has been pointed out before. But there must be a third time, as in the beginning of the Gospel there is marked off a third day. That third day brought the marriage in Cana of Galilee, a blessed picture of the Kingdom which follows Israel's conversion, typified by Nathanael's conversion.

The three days in the beginning of this Gospel (chapter i:35, 43 and ii:1), with their sweet and instructive dispensational lessons, are repeated at the close of the Gospel in the three manifestations of the risen One. The third time He showed Himself to his disciples is, as we shall see, a striking prophetic picture of what will happen after Israel has confessed Him, as Thomas did. The lesson is the coming ingathering of the Gentile nations into the millennial kingdom. This is a strong evidence that this Gospel could not end with the twentieth chapter.

The scene is at the sea of Tiberias, or as it is also called, the lake of Gennesaret, the sea of Galilee. What holy and blessed memories gather around this historic lake! It is the sea across which the disciples toiled hard in rowing, with the wind contrary; the sea across which He came walking, when Peter left the little ship and walked to meet Him. The lake is often stormy; but He stilled the waves and the wind with His commanding word of power. At another occasion there was a miraculous draught of fishes, when the net broke. In this lake Peter caught the fish, at His direction, which supplied the coin to pay the tribute money. Sitting in a boat at the lake shore, He delivered some of His parables (Matt. xiii). On its shore He fed the multitudes, and in this lake the 2,000 swine had rushed to destruction, when the demons had entered into them. In one word this lake was the frequent scene of the display of His divine power and glory. Once more it is to witness His gracious power, His loving kindness, His mercy as well as His Lordship.

We see seven disciples gathered together, among these the two disciples which figure so prominently in the beginning and in the end of this Gospel, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee and Thomas. Were they in Galilee following the instruction of the angel and as commanded later by Himself? (Matt. xxviii:7,10). Simon Peter is evidently the leader of the little group. He proposed to go a fishing and the others followed him as leader. There was nothing wrong with these disciples when they took up their trade as fishermen. The time for witness bearing had not yet come, for the promised Spirit had not yet been given. The fear of the Jews still controlled them all. Perhaps it was also the matter of necessity, for they were poor men, who had to toil to support themselves. But their labors were in vain. Though they were excellent fishermen, and fished all night, they caught nothing. Well may we see the lesson here that all toil without the Lord goes for nothing; unless He directs there is no success.

Verses 4-14. When the morning was come the risen One appeared suddenly on the shore. It was as sudden an appearance as at the two previous occasions, when they met behind closed doors. Where our Lord was between these different visible manifestations we do not know. The disciples saw a figure standing on the shore, but they did not know that it was Jesus, their Lord and Master. They did not recognize Him, just as the two going to Emmaus did not know Him, because their eyes were holden. And as He called to them across the water, they did not know Him either by His voice. He spoke like one of their comrades, "Boys (not children) have ye anything to eat?" And they answered Him, "No." Then He spoke a word of command, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." This instruction must have given to the disciples the first hint that the speaker might be the Lord. Would they have followed the command of a total stranger? Were not John and Peter reminded of the time when many months before, on the same lake, they had toiled all night and caught nothing, but at His Word they let down the nets once more and a miraculous draught of fishes resulted! The net was cast at once, following the direction given, and when the multitude of fishes were caught, the identity of the stranger at the shore was no longer guess work with them.

John, with a heart filled with love, which made him keen-sighted, recognized the Lord at once, just as he outran Peter and was the first to believe that Christ is risen. As elsewhere in this Gospel, which his inspired pen wrote, he speaks of himself as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." He said to Peter, "It is the Lord." But Peter is again close behind the beloved disciple. Impetuous, impulsive, yet affectionate, he rushed at once into action, he cast himself into the sea to reach the shore as quickly as possible. He is not going to be left behind now, as it was when John beat him in running to the tomb in the garden. And probably he succeeded this time. The other disciples came in a little ship, dragging along the net with fishes, which unlike the other net, when there was a miraculous draught of fishes, was not broken (Luke v:1-10). What took place, if Peter reached the Lord first, is not recorded. Here then is another spiritual lesson. Service without Him and without His guidance is barren. Alas! how much of such service there is today. Service in self-will, or under the leadership of a man, as it was with the six disciples who followed Peter that memorable night. But if we take our directions from Him who is our Lord, especially as "fishers of men," that is soul winners, and are obedient to His words, and follow His directions, His own gracious power will accompany our toil.

Another miracle is seen by them when they gather at the shore. "As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." How did this coal fire, the broiling fish and the bread get there? A little while before they had acknowledged that they had nothing to eat. And here is a breakfast prepared for His beloved, toiling servants. There is but one solution of this mystery. The pierced hands of the Christ had prepared this meal. He started the coal fire. He produced by His own omnipotent power, the fish and the bread. He showed once more, as He did in the days of His humiliation on the same scene, by feeding the multitudes with bread, that He is a compassionate, tender, loving Lord, who cares for the bodies and temporal needs of His own, as He cares for their souls. Such a Lord He is still, He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; He is interested even in a breakfast for His children. As we look upon this beautiful scene, His deep compassion, remembering that He is still the same, the Lord that changeth not, we take new courage to come with boldness to the throne of grace, and tell Him all our needs. He loves to be trusted and loves to show forth His loving kindness and tender mercies, as He did when He prepared that morning meal.

What is the dispensational meaning of this third manifestation of the risen Christ and the miraculous draught of fishes? It is the picture of the coming kingdom, established after Israel's conversion, when the nations of the earth will be gathered in. The miraculous draught of fishes in the Gospel of Luke is a picture of the Gospel net during this present age. It breaks and those which are caught can not be numbered. But it is different here; the net did not break and the actual number of the great fish caught is given, there were One Hundred and Fifty and Three. Much guess-work has been done as to the meaning of this number.We cannotbe dogmatic about it. But the fact that the exact number is given shows that it has a meaning. It is of great significance that historians of the first century speak of the number of nations known to them as being 153. This is the only meaning which we know of. All the nations, when the Lord comes, will be gathered into His Kingdom.

Then the divine host asked them to partake of the spread meal He had so graciously and miraculously provided. Here again we see His tender compassion. He knew they were tired and hungry. He Himself in the days of humiliation had been tired and hungry, and therefore He is always touched with the feeling of our infirmities. But what will be the feast to which He brings His own in days to come, the marriage supper of the Lamb? But why did they not ask Him, who art Thou? They knew it was the Lord. It must have been a holy awe which kept them from asking. Here too is proof that His resurrection-body, though the same incarnation body, must have been altered.

Verses 15-17. The meal was over and the Lord turned next to Peter. His denial had led Peter to the depths of repentance and self-judgment. We must rehearse briefly some of these things. Let us remember before Peter ever denied the Lord, He knew what was coming. Satan saw that Peter was a marked man. He had heard what the Lord had said about him (Matt. xvi). He tried to snatch him away from the Lord, and so Satan had asked permission to sift him, just as long before he had asked for Job. And the Lord assured Peter of His intercession in his behalf. Peter's faith for this reason could not fail.

When the denial had taken place, the Lord "looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord." What a look that must have been! Then Peter went out and wept bitterly. A blessed weeping it was.

In the third place the risen One sent a special message to Peter through the women: "Tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee." But more than that He appeared to Peter. "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon" (Luke xxiv:33). "He was seen of Cephas" (1 Cor. xv:5). What occurred at this mysterious interview is a secret. No doubt the Lord had then direct dealings with Peter, which he was not permitted to reveal.

And now we come to his restoration to that which he had lost by his denial. He addressed Peter. The meal which they had enjoyed together was an expression of fellowship. Not a word of rebuke had come from the lips of the Lord. He might have pointed to the coal-fire and might have asked Peter if he remembered another coal-fire, before which he had warmed himself a number of days ago in the palace of the high priest. He might have asked him of the words of denial he had then spoken. But He addressed him in these words, "Simon Peter, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" The reason for this question is very plain. What the Lord asked him was exactly what he had professed. He was loud-mouthed in his profession of devotion to Him, saying, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death." Confidently he had spoken thus of his strength. Then he denied Him thrice. When the Lord asked him the same question three times He touched most graciously the sore spot, reminding him of his past profession of devotion, and of his three denials. It had to be done not in secret, but before the six witnesses. Forgiveness was not involved in this. The Lord had forgiven him already; it was the answer to his penitential tears. The Lord had to restore him to service. In the presence of these witnesses He commissioned Peter once more, as He had done at Cesarea Philippi, after Peter had confessed Him as the Son of God. If such a restoration and renewed commission had not taken place others might have pointed to Peter and charged him with having forfeited his apostleship by his denial, while Peter would have been in serious doubt and uncertainty.

Roman Catholic theologians claim that the Lord established him here as the head of the Church. Dean Burgon answered this claim in the following statements: "The profane and ridiculous pretensions of the Church of Rome are based in great part on the words our Lord addressed to St. Peter in this passage. The Papists assume (1) that He hereby appointed Peter to be His vicar upon earth; (2) that Peter was the first Bishop of Rome and (3) that Peter transmitted to the Bishops of the same See, in endless succession his own supposed authority over the rest of Christendom. Each one of these assumptions is simply unfounded and untrue; opposed alike to Scripture and reason; to the records of the early Church and the opinions of the primitive fathers."

"Lovest thou Me more than these?" Then Peter answered "Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Our version does not distinguish at all between the two words used in the Greek, translated by "love". The two words are the verbs "*Agapao*"; this expresses fully our English "love"; then there is the word "*Phileo*", which corresponds to our English "like", or as it has been translated "to have a friendly feeling." When the Lord put His question to Peter, the first word is used, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (*Agapas*) thou

Me more than these?" Now if Peter had not judged himself, if he had still adhered to the same self-confidence he exhibited before, he would have answered enthusiastically by using the same word the Lord had used. Instead he answered "Thou knowest that I love (*Philo*) Thee." He did not dare to use the word which expresses the highest affection. It is the evidence that he had learned the lesson and judged himself. The second time the Lord asked Peter He uses the same word, and Peter answers Him in the same way, employing also the same word, expressing a friendly affection. But when the Lord asked Peter the third time He uses the same word Peter had used, "Peter, lovest (*Phileis*) thou Me?" And Peter was grieved because He had asked him the third time, and answers appealing to His divine omniscience, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love (*Philo*) Thee." The wound had been probed to the very bottom, though not a word of blame or reproach had come from the lips of the Lord. Peter had revealed in his three answers that his old self had been judged and broken.

And He, who knows indeed all things, knew the condition and state of his soul. He knew that Peter loved Him, and so with the first question He commissioned afresh and said "Feed My lambs." He did not mean, as it is so often taught, little children; He means by this term believers, who are young in the faith and lack in deep spiritual experience. They are the little children in the epistle of John, and that which is weak has always His first and tenderest care. Even so Isaiah had spoken of Him as the shepherd. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Is. xl:11). This blessed work, to feed that which is weak with the bread of life, he committed to Peter. It is a higher work than the exercise of the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. Those keys were used by Peter when he preached to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and used again in the house of Cornelius, preaching to the Gentiles. With this the use of the keys was exhausted. Feeding His lambs is the more permanent work.

The second time the Lord commissions him, if we translate literally, to shepherd His sheep. The sheep are those which the Spirit of God in John's epistle designates as "young men and fathers," the more mature believers. He is commissioned to tend these sheep, to exercise a loving charge over them, doing a true shepherd's work. Augustinus called attention to the fact that the Lord calls the lambs and the sheep "My" and not "Thy." The flock is not the flock of a man, but the flock of God. Often preachers speak of "my flock" or "my people." This is an evil habit and many servants of Christ speak thus unthoughtfully. "He, who treats Christians as *his* congregation, is guilty of the same forgetfulness of Divine grace and authority as the congregation in regarding the minister as *their* minister, instead of Christ's. If any think these to be slight distinctions, it is clear that they have no right apprehension of a difference which is as deep in truth as it is fraught with the most momentous consequences for good and ill in practice. Only this gives moral elevation, as it alone springs from faith; this alone delivers from self, and gives the true relation and character, even Christ, whether to those that minister, or to those ministered to." (Wm. Kelly.)

When Peter later wrote his letter he exhorts the elders, as an elder, to do the same which the Lord commissioned him to do. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock" (1 Pet. v:2-3).

And once more the Lord said "Feed my sheep," or as some manuscripts record it, "little sheep," which is a term of endearment. And what the Lord told Peter He tells all those who are called by Him to minister to His flock. It is the expression of His own love for His sheep, which the servant of Christ is to manifest and which must constrain him. Well has it been said, "Love is the great endowment of a true pastor of Christ's flock. He says not to Peter, 'Art thou wise? or learned? or eloquent?' but 'Lovest thou me?' Then, 'feed.' Love to Christ begets love to His own people's souls, which are so precious to Him, and care of feeding them."

Verses 18-25. But He spoke other words to Peter, which are also linked to his former conduct. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Thus spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me." It is the last "Verily" of this Gospel, in which this word so frequently appears. In self-confidence Peter had boasted that he would go to prison with the Lord, and die with Him. He failed miserably. But what he offered to do and could not do, the risen Christ would make possible for him. He announced the manner of his death and the time of his death, and thereby proving that as Lord He controls the departure of His servants out of this life. Peter was not yet an old man. He was still in his prime of natural vigor. When younger still he ventured to go whither he would, that is in self-will and self-confidence, as he did when he walked into the palace of the high priest after boasting that he would die with Christ. The Lord told him when he would be older, an aged man, what he as a young man in fullest vigor failed to do, the Lord through Grace and Power, would enable him to do. He announced that the mode of his death would be like Christ's death, by crucifixion. When he wrote his second epistle, he was an old man. He referred then to these words spoken to him by the Lord, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has showed me" (2 Pet. 1:14).

There is a legend that Peter was in Rome when he was condemned to be crucified. It is said he tried to escape, and outside of Rome he met the Lord, whom he addressed by saying in Latin "*Quo Vadis Domine*," Whither goest thou Lord? And the Lord answered, "To be crucified afresh"; then Peter turned back. But it is only a legend. We can rest assured when the time came Peter, as the Lord had said, stretched out his hands, ready to be crucified. It was the Grace and the Power of the risen, enthroned Christ, which made it possible. And so it was with the martyred millions in the beginning of the Church, as well as the host of martyrs before, during and after the reformation.

Then He said to Peter "Follow Me." Here too we are reminded of Peter's former words, "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now?" This was in answer to the statement of the Lord "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards" (John xiii:36,37). The time for this had come and came still more fully when Peter died on the cross. It also may be looked upon as a renewed call to follow Him, not afar off, as he had done, but in closest fellowship. And into this He has called us all.

Then Peter's eye rested upon John and he said "Lord, and what shall this man do?" By this question he evidenced a loving interest in the beloved disciple with whom he had been more closely associated than with his brother Andrew. This interest in John made him curious to know his future destiny. The Lord answered him with a gracious rebuke. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is this to thee? Follow thou Me." He rebuked the curious anxiety of Peter and gave him to understand that He as the Lord and Master of John would order everything in John's life as He had in the life of the questioner. What is this to thee? What good will it do you? The words "If I will that he tarry till I come" have been differently interpreted. The Lord probably meant that John should be the last of His Apostles to pass from this earth, and that he was the chosen one who should behold in a great vision, as he did in Patmos, the end of the age, and the Lord's return in judgment and in the establishment of His kingdom. Others have taken it as an hypothetical expression, that the Lord was just supposing to have him tarry till He comes.

At once a tradition was started among the brethren that John should not die. Just a little word had been omitted, the little word "if." The Lord did not say "I will that he tarry till I come"; or that John should not die. How much harm there has been done, and is being done today, by wrong quotation of Scripture and building upon a perverted text, a misquoted saying, some unscriptural doctrine. And this saying did not die with the apostolic age. So late as the sixteenth century an enthusiast was burned at Toulouse who claimed to be the Apostle John.

The closing verses have been denied a Johanine authorship by many scholars and critics. There is no valid reason for such a supposition. It was not an amanuensis, or a friend of the Apostle, who concluded this Gospel with the statements of the last two verses, but John himself. He bears a solemn declaration that he is the author of all this document contains. The beloved disciple wrote these things. This is sufficient evidence. When he wrote "we know that his testomony is true" he writes as he did in his epistles—we have heard—we have seen and we know. The last verse is a description of the quantity and value of Christ's works and words. For the adoring John they seemed so wonderful, so vast in their meaning and so deep, that the world could not contain the books that might be written.

We have reached the end of this blessed Gospel and we quote the late Bishop Ryle's words with which he concluded his excellent exposition of John, from which we have frequently quoted.

"Reader, I have now set before thee thy Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, that very Son of God, who was begotten by the Father by an eternal and ineffable generation, consubstantial and coequal with the Father in all things;—but in these last times, according to prophetical oracles, was incarnate for us, suffered, died, rose again from the dead, and was made King and Lord of all things. This is He who is appointed and given to us by God the Father, as the fullness of all grace and truth, as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, as the ladder and door of heaven, as the serpent lifted up to render the poison of sin harmless, as the water which refreshes the thirsty, as the bread of life, as the light of the world, as the redeemer of God's children, as the shepherd and door of the sheep, as the resurrection and the life, as the corn of wheat which springs up into much fruit, as the conqueror of the prince of this world, as the way, the truth, and the life, as the true vine, and finally, as the redemption, salvation, satisfaction, and righteousness of all the faithful in all the world, throughout all ages. Let us therefore pray God the Father, that, being taught by His Gospel, we may know Him that is true, and believe in Him in whom alone is salvation; and that, believing, we may feel God living in us in this world, and in the world to come may enjoy His eternal and most blessed fellowship." Amen and Amen.

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